

Yilmaz rejects PKK cease-fire offer

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz on Saturday dismissed an unconditional cease-fire offer by the head of Kurdish separatist militants, saying the government would never accept the rebel leader as a negotiating partner.

Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan on Friday declared an unconditional cease-fire in the fight against the Turkish state, in a broadcast by Med-TV, the channel of the separatist Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK).

"We will never accept him as a negotiating partner," Yilmaz told journalists, "if he is taking steps to surrender, having grasped that he is in a desperate situation and cannot fight against the Turkish state, I call that positive. But if he is aiming to create a political platform in Europe, his efforts are in vain."

Ocalan was reported in June to have sent a letter to the Council of Europe's 572 deputies in Strasbourg to express his view that a political solution to the Kurdish issue should be found rapidly.

The outlawed PKK has conducted an armed rebellion against Ankara in the predominantly Kurdish southeast of Turkey since 1984 with the aim of creating an independent Kurdish state.

Ocalan, alias "Apo," said the cease-fire could come into effect on Tuesday, World Peace Day, to settle "the Kurdish national question peacefully and begin a dialogue" with the Turkish government.

Ocalan, usually resident in Damascus or in the Syrian-controlled sector of Lebanon's Bekaa valley, says the PKK

represents the eight to 12 million Kurds living in Turkey, whose overall population is some 63 million.

The Turkish government rejects the PKK as representative of the Kurdish trinity and refuses any dialogue with it, dismissing it as a terrorist organisation.

Almost 31,000 people have died in the violence.

Ocalan's offer was for a truce lasting until the next Turkish elections in April of next year.

The PKK's European representative, Kani Yilmaz, said in June in Sweden that Ankara would have to recognise the PKK as a legitimate political organisation and stop referring to it as a terrorist group before the PKK would lay down its arms.

He said the PKK was trying to achieve a peaceful solution

to the Kurdish problem by working alongside NATO, the Council of Europe and the Socialist International.

The PKK previously declared unilateral cease-fires in March 1993 and December 1995 but the Turkish authorities did not recognise these.

The People's Democracy Party (Hadepe), a pro-Kurdish group, Saturday launched an appeal in support of Ocalan's unconditional cease-fire.

"Turkey requires democratic courage," it said in a statement. "Everyone living in Turkey should contribute to the cease-fire process."

The Turkish government considers Hadepe the PKK's political wing and several of its leaders are under legal investigation on charges of "having acted and held views supportive of the PKK."

Turkey rejects 'bargaining' over Cyprus missiles

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey said on Saturday it would not accept any negotiations over the controversial S-300 missiles due to be deployed in Cyprus by the Greek-Cypriot government later this year.

"We will not allow the S-300s to become the subject of bargaining," the Turkish foreign ministry said in response to comments by Greek and Greek-Cypriot leaders that they were ready to discuss any proposals to demilitarise the divided Mediterranean island.

"The problems over the S-300s were created by Greece and the Greek-Cypriots, who must assume all responsibility for any negative developments these weapons provoke," the ministry said in a statement.

Ankara's comments come ahead of a visit Monday to Turkish-held northern Cyprus by Foreign Minister Ismail Cem for talks with Turkish-Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş and other officials.

70,000 Iranian soldiers to hold exercises near Afghan border

TEHRAN (AP) — Some 70,000 elite Iranian soldiers plan to hold exercises near the border with Afghanistan, where Tehran claims the Taliban militia is holding 47 Iranians.

The Islamic revolutionary Guards Corps will hold the manoeuvres, code named Ashura 3, within the next few days, Maj. Gen. Yahya Rahim Safavi, the commander of the IRGC, said Saturday.

He said preliminary exercises have already started and they will be followed by the main manoeuvres, which will last for three days.

The manoeuvres will be the largest this year and the first held near the border since the 1979 Islamic revolution, he said.

Iran has accused the Taliban militia, which controls most of the country, of detaining 47 Iranians since it captured the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif on Aug. 8. The detainees include 11 diplomats, one journalist and 35 truck drivers.

The Taliban says it knows nothing about the Iranian diplomats, but it admits to holding some 30 Iranians sus-

pected of arming its opponents.

"It is natural that our manoeuvres are not unrelated to the recent Afghan affairs," Safavi said in a press conference attended for the first time by foreign as well as local reporters.

Last week, IRGC troops were deployed on the border with Afghanistan to monitor the movement of forces fighting the civil war there.

Also last week, former President Hashemi Rafsanjani warned that Iran might resort to force to free the Iranians.

Khatami sues two publications for defamation

TEHRAN (AP) — Iranian President Mohammad Khatami is suing two hard-line publications for libel, the country's official news agency reported Saturday.

The suits against the weekly newspaper Shalameh and the monthly magazine Ya Lassarat Al Hossein will begin in a Tehran court Monday, the Islamic Republic News Agency quoted a

judiciary official as saying. The directors of the publications have been summoned to appear.

Khatami is accusing the publications, both founded and sponsored by the militant Ansar-e Hizbollah group, of printing "insults and lies and violating the press law," IRNA said.

The official, said Nowbari, told the agency the

suits stem from articles published at the time of the presidential elections in May 1997. He did not elaborate.

During the campaign, both publications sharply criticised Khatami, who was the leading moderate candidate.

It was not clear why Khatami has waited so long to file the suit.

Khatami's landslide victory

against a hard-liner in the campaign was widely welcomed by women and young people in Iran who saw it as a triumph for civil liberties.

But the president has encountered strong opposition from conservatives within the ruling hierarchy who accuse him of betraying the 1979 Islamic Revolution led by the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Qadhafi offers lawyer to defend Clinton

CAIRO (AP) — Libyan President Muammar Qadhafi offered Friday to send a lawyer to defend U.S. President Bill Clinton in the case arising from his relationship with a former White House intern.

In an interview with the Qatari television channel Al Jazeera, Qadhafi spoke of world leaders past and present and confirmed reports of a British-sponsored attempt to assassinate him in 1996.

Qadhafi said the scandal of Clinton's involvement with Monica Lewinsky was instigated by the American Jewish lobby which, he added, was behind all the president's actions.

"Even this Monica [case], was organised by Jews. It is a Jewish and Zionist conspiracy," Qadhafi said in an interview. "I have no bad intentions towards [Clinton], and I was willing to send him a lawyer to defend him."

"He is a victim. Even the strikes against Sudan, Afghanistan and Baghdad are the work of Zionism," Qadhafi said, referring to U.S. cruise missile attacks on Sudan and Afghanistan last week and previously against Iraq.

Qadhafi blasted former U.S. President Ronald Reagan, who ordered an air attack on Libya in 1986 in retaliation for the bombing of a Berlin discotheque in which two U.S. servicemen were killed. Libya said 37 people, including an adopted daughter of Qadhafi, were killed in the attack.

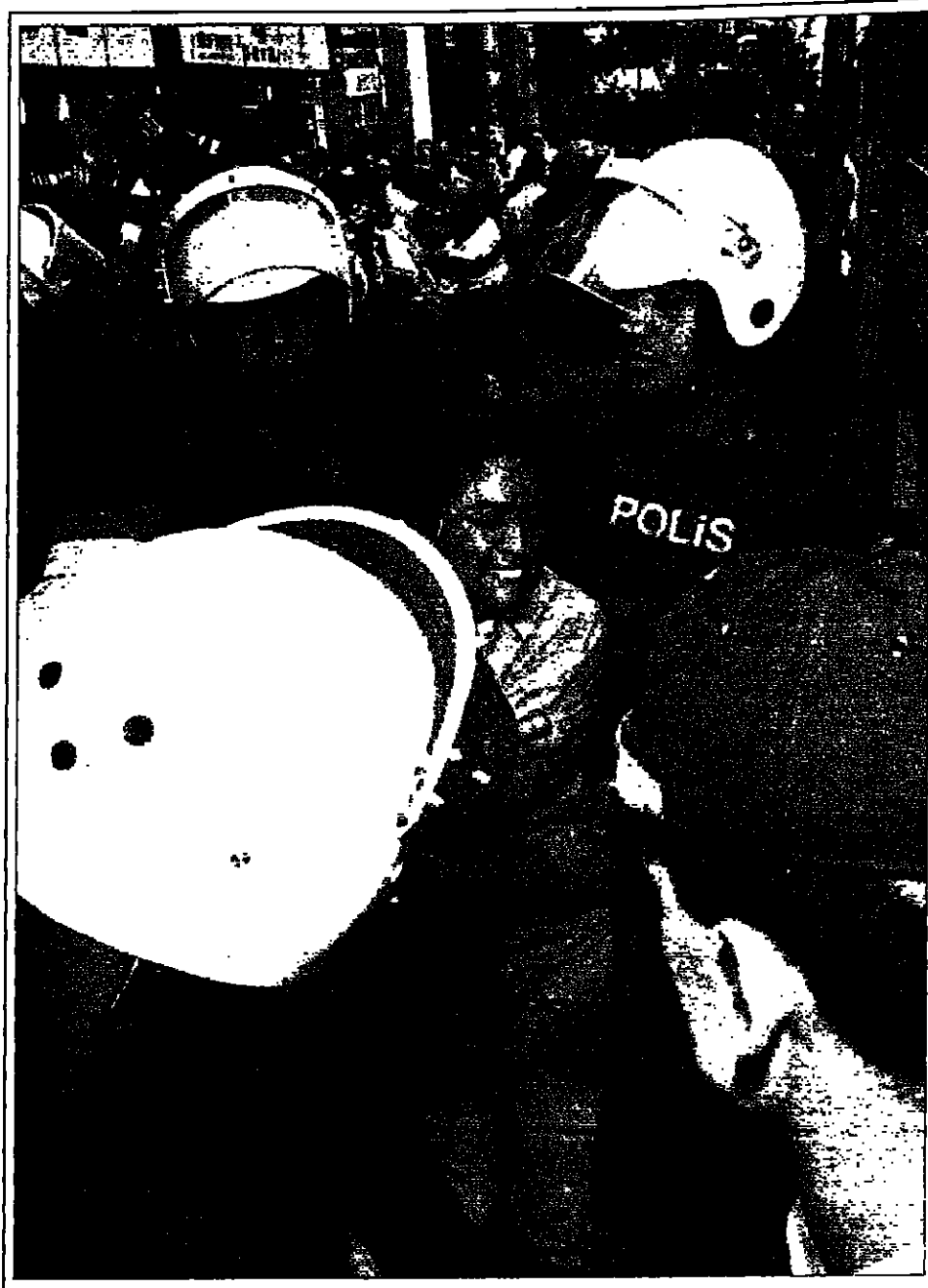
"Clinton is not Reagan, who was ridiculous, an idiot, aggressive and behaved like a cowboy. When I used to tell people he was crazy, they used to say no. Now it has

become clear because he is suffering from [Alzheimer's disease]," Qadhafi said.

The Libyan president revealed a soft spot for British Prime Minister Tony Blair, whom he described as "the young man ruling Britain now [who] is not like [former Prime Minister Margaret] Thatcher, who was full of spite. He is a man with whom we have no problem."

Qadhafi confirmed recent allegations of a plot to kill him.

A former British agent, David Shayler, told British media this month that Britain's Secret Intelligence Service channelled about \$160,000 to an Islamist group to kill Qadhafi by planting a bomb under a road. The BBC reported that the attempt was carried out in February 1996 and killed several people. The British government denied any role in the affair.



DEMONSTRATOR ARRESTED IN ISTANBUL: A woman protester is taken to a police bus Saturday following a demonstration in Istanbul by some two hundred people against the government's failure to find 'the disappeared.' About 60 demonstrators were detained after rallying for solidarity with the so-called Saturday Mothers, relatives of those who are missing, in Istanbul's busy pedestrian street of Istiklal (Reuters photo)

Palestinian court sentences three police officers to death

GAZA CITY (AFP) — A Palestinian military tribunal sentenced three Palestinian police officers to death Saturday for a double murder in the Gaza Strip two days ago.

Fares Abu Sultan and his two brothers, Mohammad and Raed, who are all members of one of the Palestinian police services, will go before a firing squad, court officials said, without giving a date.

The court gave a fourth brother life imprisonment and one of their cousins five years in prison with hard labour.

The three condemned men opened fire with their service weapons during a quarrel Thursday with members of the Khalidi family, killing brothers Majdi and Mohammad and seriously wounding a third brother.

Majdi Khalidi was an officer in the Palestinian intelligence service, and both he and Mohammad were members of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction.

Fatah organised a strike to close shops in several sectors of the Gaza Strip Saturday in a sign of mourning and party activists burned tyres, blocking roads there.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Six Algerian farmers killed

ALGIERS (AP) — Assaults believed to be part of an Islamist protection racket tortured and slit the throats of six farmers in western Algeria, hospital officials said Saturday. The six victims — four men and two women — were found dead Friday afternoon near their farms close to Tipaza, 100 kilometres west of Algiers. Locals said the attackers belonged to the Armed Islamic Group, and were running a protection racket in the area. Further west, near the Moroccan border, Algeria's security forces have been scouring the Ain Sefra region in search of Islamists for the last ten days.

Sudan rebels free PoWs

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Eighty-three prisoners of war have returned to Khartoum after being released by rebels in the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), a government source said Saturday. Most of the PoWs were government soldiers who had been captured in fighting with the SPLA. They had been held in Yei town in south Sudan and were released after mediation by the International Committee of the Red Cross, which flew them to Nairobi where they were collected by a Sudanese plane for the return to Khartoum.

'Libyan plane flies into Sudan'

KHARTOUM (AFP) — A Libyan plane has flown into Khartoum carrying a delegation of Libyan officials, in defiance of the U.N. air embargo imposed on Tripoli six years ago, the

Sudanese press reported Saturday. The aircraft, which arrived on Thursday evening and left 24 hours later, was also carrying medicines, it said. During the visit, delegation leader Abdul Hamid Ammar, the Libyan-Arab relations coordinator, condemned the U.S. attack on a Khartoum pharmaceutical plant on August 20 as "a dirty American aggression."

'9 Iraqis blown up by mines'

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Nine Iraqis have been blown up in recent days by landmines or shells left over from the 1991 Gulf war, an Iraqi newspaper reported on Saturday. Three shepherds died in the desert region of Safwan and another six Iraqis were killed near the border with Kuwait, the official Al Jumhuriya newspaper quoted the governor of the Al Zubair region as saying.

'Iran doll production hits snag'

TEHRAN (R) — Technical problems have delayed the production of Sara and Dara, Iran's answer to Barbie and Ken which are condemned in the Islamic republic as symbols of "Western decadence," a newspaper reported on Saturday. "The Sara and Dara dolls were due to be introduced last year but nothing has been achieved in this regard because of industrial difficulties," the daily Quds quoted Mohsen Chiniforoushan, head of a youth culture centre in charge of producing the dolls, as saying. "Our main effort is to not compromise quality for the sake of speed," said Chiniforoushan.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 477111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 Cartoon — The Pink Panther
15:20 Cartoon — The Pumpkin Patch
15:30 The Adventures of the Black Stallion
16:00 The American Chart Show
17:00 ...Doc... Royal Blood
18:00 Drama — Bonnie Experience
19:00 ...Le Journal
19:15 French Programme — Science Magazine (E-Me)
19:30 ...News Headlines
19:35 Life's Most Embarrassing Moments
20:00 ...People Count
20:30 Talk Show — Challenges
21:00 ...Drama — Renegade
22:00 ...News in English
22:30 Mini-series — "Titanic" (pt. 1)
00:10 The History of Rock and Roll
00:30 ...End of T. X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:43 ...Fajr
06:04 ...Sunrise/Duha
12:36 ...Dhuhr
16:13 ...Asr
19:08 ...Maghreb
20:29 ...Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 592740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

4622266 Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811. St. Arem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751. Amman International Church Tel. 5865897 German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404 The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 581295 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932 St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757 Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440 Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138 Church of Presentation, Sweifeh Tel. 5920146 The United Catholic Church Tel. 4624757 The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190 Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679 The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052 The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331 The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261	slightly with relative hot weather conditions prevailing and winds northwesterly moderate to active. In Agaba, it will be hot, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm. Min/Max. temp. 21/34 Amman 27/38 Aqaba 20/36 Deserts 20/36 Jordan Valley 26/38 Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 37, Aqaba 40 Humidity readings: Amman 20 per cent, Aqaba 43 per cent. Following are the highest temper- atures expected today in the fol- lowing areas: Ajloun 28 Jerash 34 Um Qays 35 Madaba 35 Petra 36 Dead Sea 42	Al Salam pharmacy 4636730 Yacoub pharmacy 4644945 Shmeisani pharmacy 4637660 Najib pharmacy 5347632 IRBID: Dr. Issam Salih 246858 Al Quds pharmacy (—) ZARQA: Dr. Hilal Sayyid 3852902 Khalifeh pharmacy 985417 EMERGENCIES Food Control Centre 4637111 Civil Defence Department 5661111 Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341 Civil Defence Emergency 199 Rescue Police 192 4621111 4637777 Fire Brigade 4617101 Blood Bank 4775121 Highway Police 5343402 Traffic Police 4896390 Public Security Dept. 4630321 Price Complaints 5661176 Water & Sewage Complaints 4897467 Amman Municipality Complaints 4787111 1 Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121 Overseas Calls 010230 Central Amman Telephone Repairs 4623101 Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101 Jordan Television 4773111 Radio Jordan 4774111	Water Authority 5680100 J. Electricity Authority 5815615 Electric Power Co. 4636381 RJ Flight Information 44-53200 Queen Alia Int. Airport 44-53200 HOSPITALS AMMAN: The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199 The Islamic, Abdi 5661317 Husseini Medical Centre Tel. 5858586 Luzmila 4630195 Khalidi Maternity 4644281/6 Akileh Maternity 464241/2 Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362 Malhas, J. Amman 4636140 Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071 Shmeisani Hospital 5669131 University Hospital 5653444 Al-Muasher Hospital 5667279 Al-Ahli, Abdi 5664164/6 Italian, Al-Muhajreen 4777101/3 Al-Bashir 4775111/26 Army, Marka 4891611/15 Queen Alia Hospital 5620240/50 Amal Hospital 5674155 ZARQA: Zarqa Govt. Hospital 09/983323 Zarqa National Hospital 09/980560 Al Sina Hospital 09/986732 Al Hikma Modern Hospital 09/990990 IRBID: Princess Basma Hospital 02/275555 Greek Catholic Hospital 21:25	09:00 ...Lamaca (RJ) 09:15 ...Frankfurt, Berlin (RJ) 12:15 ...Vienna (RJ) 12:30 ...Rome (RJ) 12:40 Amsterdam, New York (RJ) 13:15 ...Tunis, Casablanca (RJ) 13:25 ...London (RJ) 14:00 ...Athens (RJ) 18:50 ...Cairo (RJ) 21:00 ...New Delhi (RJ) 21:25 ...Jeddah (RJ) 21:40 ...Damascus (RJ) 22:15 ...Beirut (RJ) 22:40 ...Madrid (add) (RJ) 22:55 ...Abu Dhabi, Bangkok (RJ) 23:55 ...Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ) 00:10 ...Riyadh (add) (RJ) 00:30 ...Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ) 00:30 ...Sanat (RJ) Other Flights 07:30 ...Paris (AF) 07:35 ...Damascus, London (BA) 09:55 ...Abu Dhabi, Dubai (EK) 12:30 ...Al Haddad (KY) 12:45 ...Kuwait (TU) 14:00 ...Jeddah (SV) 14:10 ...Moscow (SU) 14:25 ...Doha (GF) 16:30 ...Doha (QR) 20:00 ...Beirut (ME) 20:45 ...Tel Aviv (LY) 22:00 ...Cairo (MS) 02:15 ...Beirut, Amsterdam (KL) 03:40 ...Belgrade (OK) 03:45 ...Beirut, Athens (OA) 04:00 ...Rome (AZ) Royal Wings (RW) 08:00 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW) 08:45 ...Tel Aviv (from QAIA) (RW) 09:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW) 21:30 ...Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)
--	--	--	---	--

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Abbas Hakim 4885446
Dr. Arafat Ashhab 5602507
Dr. Ayman Muhtaseb 4875748
Dr. Jamal Jarrar 5347351
Firas pharmacy 5661912
Al Asma pharmacy 4637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 4623672

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Temperatures are expected to drop

Home

Heat wave has hurt agricultural, livestock production

By Randa Naffa
The heat wave in Jordan has caused a significant drop in agricultural and livestock production. Farmers are reporting a 20% decrease in crop yields and a 30% drop in livestock sales. The high temperatures have also led to a shortage of water for irrigation and drinking. The government has urged farmers to take precautions and has provided some financial assistance to help them cope with the situation.

Cerebral F or annua

By Randa Naffa
The Jordanian government has announced a new policy for the management of the country's natural resources. The policy aims to protect the environment and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources. It includes measures to control deforestation, protect wildlife, and manage water resources. The government has also established a new agency to oversee the implementation of the policy.

NO students

By Randa Naffa
The Jordanian government has announced a new policy for the management of the country's natural resources. The policy aims to protect the environment and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources. It includes measures to control deforestation, protect wildlife, and manage water resources. The government has also established a new agency to oversee the implementation of the policy.

What's Going On

By Randa Naffa
The Jordanian government has announced a new policy for the management of the country's natural resources. The policy aims to protect the environment and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources. It includes measures to control deforestation, protect wildlife, and manage water resources. The government has also established a new agency to oversee the implementation of the policy.

German liberals battle Greens to stay kingmakers

BONN (R) — Germany's liberals, traditional kingmakers in Bonn, pledged Saturday at a pre-election congress to fend off any attempt by the ecological Greens to usurp their position as the country's third political force.

The liberal Free Democrats (FDP), which have helped form nearly every government since 1969, are part of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's centre-right coalition with his Christian Democrats and the Bavarian-based Christian Social Union.

But with just four weeks to go before the Sept. 27 general election, they are teetering on the brink of extinction, polling about five per cent — the minimum needed to be returned to the Bundestag (lower house of parliament).

Party chief Wolfgang Gerhardt said the party, a self-styled champion of the free market and lower taxes, was fighting the election in direct competition with the Greens for the role of future kingmakers.

"The Greens are our main competitors in the

decision over Germany's future direction. Because in the end it will come down to the Greens or the FDP," Gerhardt told some 660 delegates at the party congress in Bonn.

The Greens, who are polling around six per cent in national voter surveys, are widely regarded as potential coalition partners for the opposition Social Democrats (SPD) who are tipped to win the federal election.

Stressing their achievements as kingmakers in Bonn, Gerhardt held up party member Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel as an example of the party's competence and experience in government.

"We stand for a reliable foreign policy. Liberal foreign policy is epitomised in Klaus Kinkel," he told the congress.

The foreign ministry is a traditional FDP stronghold in coalition governments and Gerhardt also invoked the name of the party's most famous elder statesman and former foreign minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, to stress that legacy.

The SPD are leading Kohl's embattled conser-

vatives in the polls by between five and three per cent. The liberal FDP's election performance could also have an impact on Kohl's flagging reelection chances.

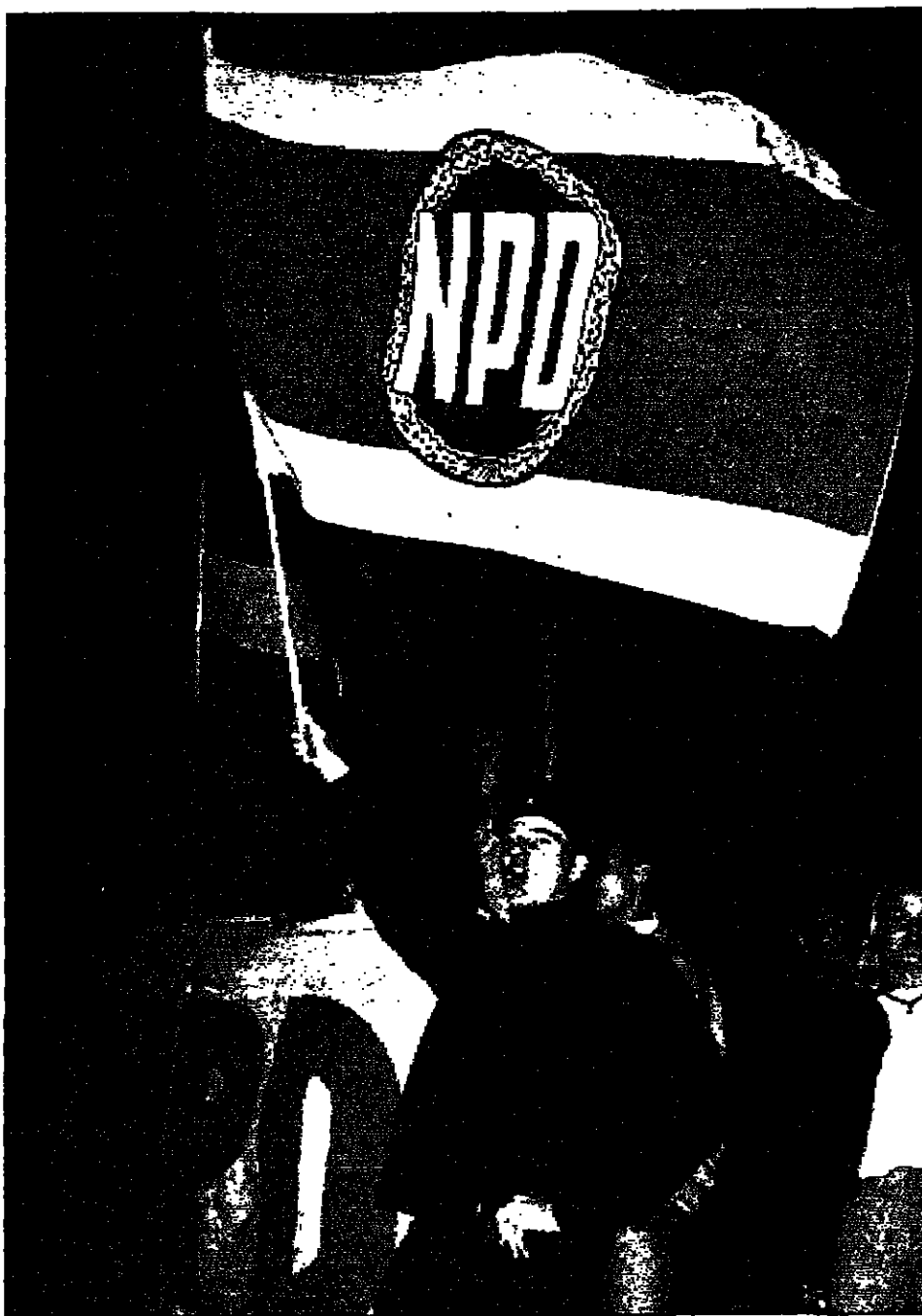
The liberals, unlike in previous years, say they are not prepared to form a future coalition government with the SPD.

Some political analysts say the liberals' bid to clear the five-per cent threshold is one of the most critical issues in the upcoming election.

Gerhardt also sought to put an end to a potentially damaging dispute which flared this week over whether or not Kohl should set down a timetable to hand over the reins to his preferred successor, CDU parliamentary leader Wolfgang Schäuble.

"Helmut Kohl has proposed Schäuble as his successor and when the time comes I am prepared to take over responsibility for Germany alongside him (Schäuble)."

"But first we want to win the election," Gerhardt said.



Anti-Kohl demonstrators carry flags of the ultra-right wing German National Democratic Party (NPD) during an election campaign rally for the upcoming general elections in the border town Frankfurt/Oder. Germany votes for a new government on Sept. 27 (Reuters photo)

Government troops mop up in Kinshasa, rebels flee

KINSHASA (R) — Government forces harried rebel infiltrators in the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo Saturday while humanitarian sources reported a stream of wounded and fleeing rebels escaping across the Congo river.

Having declared victory Saturday over the Tutsi-led rebels in the battle for Kinshasa, Congolese forces loyal to President Laurent Kabila continued mopping up operations around the capital, occasionally resorting to heavy weapons.

A coalition of Congolese, Zimbabwean, Angolan and Namibian troops have turned the tide in the month old rebellion that has exposed yawning rifts in the region and threatened to spark a full scale international war.

Kabila himself, who accuses former allies Rwanda and Uganda of backing and supplying the rebels, was absent from Kinshasa.

The two countries which helped Kabila overthrow veteran dictator Mobutu Sese Seko in May last year deny the charge but have reserved the right to intervene in the interests of their national security.

There have been unconfirmed reports that Burundian troops have also been fighting alongside the rebels, but Saturday a senior government minister said his

country was neutral.

"Burundi will only participate to resolve the conflict peacefully," Foreign Affairs Minister Severin Nahomvukiye told reporters in Bujumbura late Friday.

In Kinshasa, loyalist forces were out on the streets in strength conducting stop and search operations as sporadic gunfire resounded from the outlying suburbs of the city of five million people.

Residents reported that normality was gradually returning to the parts of the capital that had been most affected by the street fighting that began after dawn Wednesday.

"It's calm on the whole. Sporadic shooting can still be heard, but from a long way off," a resident of Bizna suburb where Kabila's Marble Palace residence is situated, said.

Outside the capital the fate of the rebels was unclear.

They still hold the strategic Inga hydroelectric dam that supplies the capital of the former Zaire with electric power, and an Angolan army captain said Friday they had threatened to demolish it unless guaranteed safe conduct.

Some rebels were also reported to be crossing to safety in the neighbouring Congo Republic south west of the capital Brazzaville.

"Several wounded and

non-wounded rebels have been crossing at Boko locality in the south east since Thursday," one humanitarian source told Reuters in Brazzaville, adding that the Red Cross was sending a team there.

The intentions of the Angolans, whose entry into the war last weekend cutting the rebel supply lines proved decisive, was unclear.

With thousands of troops and heavy armour at their disposal, the Angolans had been expected to press the rebel rear.

But instead they appeared content to occupy the Atlantic ports of Moanda, Banana and Boma and sit tight, prompting some speculation that they were following their own agenda.

Elsewhere, the rebels claimed to be on control in the east and centre of Africa's third largest country, and to still be holding the strategically-cited city of Kisangani despite bombing by Zimbabwean jets.

Diplomatic efforts to achieve a ceasefire, led by South Africa but rebuffed by the Kabila alliance, appeared to have stalled.

But the issue is bound to come up at a summit meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement starting this weekend in the South African city of Durban — a meeting that Kabila is due to attend.

China's floods spread to Tibet, rains forecast

BEIJING (AFP) — Floods that have devastated large areas of China over the past two months have spread to Tibet and the southwest and forecast torrential rain could worsen the situation, reports said Saturday.

A spokesman for southwestern Yunnan province's flood control bureau said landslides and mudslides set off by rains had killed 477 people and injured more than 7,000 this year in the mountainous province.

Rainfall, which has continued unabated since the end of June and already destroyed 700,000 homes, will continue at least until the end of October, he said.

Fourteen million people in Yunnan have been affected, with economic losses valued at 5.8 billion yuan (\$700 million).

The situation was no better in neighbouring Tibet, where at least 53 people have been killed by flooding and mudslides since mid-June, the official press reported earlier this week.

The majority of major rivers, such as the Yarlung Zangbo (Brahmaputra) and the Lhasa River, are swollen, with more than 40 of Tibet's 70 districts affected by floods.

The official Xinhua news agency Saturday quoted meteorologists as saying a new wave of heavy rains would soon

hit much of the Himalayan region, where rising waters "have submerged large farming areas and damaged many houses over the past several weeks."

More than 100,000 civilians and troops have been mobilised to fight floods in Tibet and more than one million yuan (\$120,000) freed up to repair dykes in danger of collapsing.

According to the latest official toll released Wednesday, nationwide flooding concentrated in the Yangtze River basin and in northeastern China had killed more than 3,000 people this year.

The government began this week to admit that human errors, including massive deforestation carried out in recent years, had played an important role in worsening the severity of the flooding.

Lawmakers meeting in Beijing this week called for stricter environmental protection policies and greater spending to improve flood-control infrastructure.

Xinhua quoted them as saying the country would spend some 300 billion yuan (\$36.1 billion) in the 1996-2000 period on water-control projects.

Water levels were still high but receding on the Yangtze River in central China and the northeast's Nenjiang and Songhua rivers.

It will take at least two weeks of favourable weather to bring water levels back normal, but the flood season could extend into October if late typhoons hit the Chinese coasts.

The education ministry, meanwhile, announced two special funds to repair damaged schools and help students with flood-related financial difficulties begin the school year in September, the official China Daily reported.

The exact amount of the funds will be disclosed within two or three days, Xu Lin, deputy director of the ministry's finance department, was quoted as saying Friday.

According to incomplete statistics, 44,853 schools in 10 provinces were damaged in the floods. An estimated seven million of 8.5 million students affected by the flooding face difficulty with such costs, a ministry official said.

State television showed schoolchildren in northeastern Heilongjiang province cleaning up flood-damaged classrooms and receiving handouts of school supplies from soldiers.

The floods have caused at least 166.6 billion yuan (\$20 billion) in economic losses nationwide.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tamils protest Sri Lanka's presence at NAM summit

DURBAN, South Africa (AFP) — About 200 Sri Lankan Tamils demonstrated outside the venue of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit here Saturday, calling on South Africa to ban the Colombo government from attending. The Tamils chanted anti-government slogans, carried coffins and waved placards saying "Sri Lankans kill their own people" and "Child Murderers". The protesters called on the 113-nation summit to shun Sri Lanka, a NAM member, for civil rights abuses. The conflict in Sri Lanka, where Tamil rebels and government forces are involved in a bitter civil war, is one of several likely to be discussed at the summit. Delegates from more than 80 NAM countries began meeting in the South African city Saturday. Foreign ministers of member states were due to convene Monday and Tuesday to prepare for a full summit of heads of state Wednesday and Thursday.

Police nab three Serbs to be retried for war crimes

ZAGREB, Croatia (AP) — Police arrested three Serbs, who are to be retried on war crimes charges stemming from the 1991 war between Croatian forces and Serb rebels, the state-run HINA news agency reported. The three men, who were only identified as Pero K., 43, Vujo H., 45, and Zeljko K., 47, were among 19 Serbs, who in 1995 had been convicted in absentia of killing Croats and sentenced to prison terms between 11 and 20 years. The 19 are from the village of Sodobolci in the region known as Eastern Slavonia, which rebel Serbs seized in 1991. When the region reverted to government rule last January, the group appealed the sentence and was granted a retrial. United Nations officials, who administered the area during the transition to Croat rule, insisted that the defendants remain free during the retrials. But the Supreme court recently upheld the local district attorney's request to have the group detained during the trials. Police issued warrants for the 19 — eight of whom are believed to have fled to neighbouring Serbia — and then detained the three Friday evening. Another member of the group, Goran Vusurovic, surrendered earlier and is currently being retried. International officials based in Croatia, who monitor the country's treatment of minority Serbs, did not comment on the case Saturday.

Hurricane Bonnie regains strength, catches Virginia by surprise

VIRGINIA BEACH, Virginia (AP) — Just when people had let their guard down, Bonnie regained hurricane force and slammed the Virginia Coast, peeling off roofs, flattening trees, tearing boats from their moorings and knocking out power to 300,000 homes. Even local emergency officials were caught by surprise Friday; they had closed their offices for the night Thursday when the storm picked up steam over warm ocean water and became a hurricane again. "Who would have expected it to intensify into a hurricane? We expected a tropical storm with wind. To find we actually had a hurricane was a strange phenomenon," said Mark C. Marchbank, the resort city's deputy coordinator for emergency management. In the only deaths reported during the storm, a 12-year-old girl was killed in North Carolina's Currituck County, near the Virginia state line, when a tree fell on her house Thursday night, and a 50-year-old man in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, was electrocuted Wednesday while checking his generator after his apartment lost power. By late Friday afternoon, the storm again was downgraded to a tropical storm when winds dropped below hurricane-force 120 kph to 113 kph. At 5 a.m. (0900 GMT) Saturday, Bonnie was about 1020 kilometres southwest of Sable Island, Nova Scotia, and was moving northeast about 27 kph.

Top Swiss jazz musician and teacher dies

GENEVA (R) — Swiss jazz musician and teacher, double bass player Max Hediger who performed alongside some of the world's top jazz pianists, has died at the age of 61, the Swiss news agency ATS reported Saturday. Born in the small western Swiss town of Avenches, Hediger made several recordings with legendary French pianist Claude Bolling and with classical flautist Jean-Pierre Rampal. With Bolling and Rampal, he recorded in 1975 a best-selling disc of the pianist's Suite for Flute and Jazz Piano, and two years later provided the bass backing for Bolling and violinist Pinchas Zukerman on another hit record, of Bolling's Suite for Violin and Jazz Piano. Hediger also played with U.S. pianist and bandleader Horace Silver, who invited him to join the quintet which later became the highly successful Jazz Messengers. But Hediger turned the offer down. Over the past few years, he gave classes in jazz theory and history at the University of Fribourg and at a music college in Montreux, home of the annual jazz festival. ATS said he died last Monday and was buried in a private ceremony near Fribourg Friday.

British volunteer worker found dead in Belize was stabbed

LONDON (AFP) — A young British volunteer worker found dead in thick jungle in the central American country of Belize was stabbed, the Foreign Office said Saturday. Anna Lightfoot, 27, from Oldham, Lancashire, was found dead Friday in bushes in a remote region of southern Belize, Britain's former central American colony. Her body was taken to a British military base in the region for an autopsy to establish the exact cause of death. The young volunteer had been working for the charity Raleigh International, helping to build a school. Since June, soldiers from the British Army base in Belize were called in to mount a search when she failed to return from a shopping trip to a village in the south of the country Monday. The charity decided to evacuate its group of 17 volunteers from the area where the young woman was killed. Project director Jamie Robertson-MacLeod stressed that it was just a precaution, and that there were numerous police and soldiers in the area. Belize has been an independent country since 1981 and is still a member of the British Commonwealth. Raleigh International, founded in 1984, has sent around 19,000 young people and staff on 150 expeditions to 35 countries around the world.

Japan's premier tours flood-hit areas

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi toured flood-hit areas Saturday as rescue teams searched for four people still missing after typhoon-driven landslides and flooding claimed 13 lives.

Typhoon Rex continued churning across the Pacific Ocean towards Tokyo and its environs, stimulating a rain front over the Japanese islands, the meteorological agency said.

Packing winds of up to 144 kilometres per hour, the typhoon was expected

to reach the Pacific coast of Japan's main island of Honshu by Tuesday morning, the agency said.

Obuchi visited the site where five people were killed Thursday by a massive landslide in Nishigo village, Fukushima prefecture, 180 kilometres north of Tokyo.

The house in which the five were found dead was a residence for the mentally handicapped.

"I pray for the souls of the five who died in the worst circumstance," Obuchi told Eisaku Sato, governor of Fukushima

prefecture, hit hard by the storms. Clad in khaki work clothes, Obuchi consoled residents in Nishigo.

He then visited the near-by prefecture of Tochigi, stopping at a local elementary school in Nasu village to meet residents who took refuge there.

"Seeing is believing," Obuchi told reporters at his official residence here after returning by super-express train.

Storms whipped up by Rex have dumped a record 925 millimetres of rain on Nasu village in four days,

more than three times the average August rainfall for the entire region, said a meteorological agency official.

Four people were still missing — three from Nasu and a 41-year-old fisherman from Katsura village in Ibaraki prefecture.

"We are continuing our search," a police official in Tochigi said. "But it's been very difficult since so many roads are broken and rains keep falling."

Japan's defence agency said some 1,000 self-defence troops have been

working in these prefectures to repair roads and banks.

The national police agency said landslides and floods had killed 13 people, injured 32 and destroyed at least 123 houses.

The agency said there were at least 575 landslides, and roads were cut in 520 places. Floods washed away 19 bridges.

Rain had eased in Fukushima and Tochigi prefectures, and authorities in Ibaraki prefecture said they had lifted an evacuation order for

40,000 residents.

"Typhoon Rex is turning north, but is moving slowly," said the meteorological agency official. "It is not clear yet whether the typhoon will hit mainland Japan."

By early Sunday, Rex was expected to be about 260 kilometres south of the island of Hachijojima, which is 300 kilometres south of Tokyo.

"There will be some heavy rains in northern Japan and Hokkaido (Japan's main northern island) in later today," the official said.

— About 200 Sri
ide the venue of the
M) summit here
to ban the Colombo
Tamils chanted anti-
ins and waved plac-
sir own people" and
s called on the 113-
a NAM member, for
in Sri Lanka, where
ces are involved in a
likely to be discussed
more than 80 NAM
South African city
member states were
sday to prepare for a
re Wednesday and

e Serbs ar crimes

Police arrested three
war crimes charges
between Croatian forces
HINA news agency
ere only identified as
Zeljko K. 47, were
ad been convicted in
sentenced to prison.
The 19 are from the
ion known as Eastern
rule last January. The
was granted a retrial
administered the area
rule, insisted that the
the retrials. But the
the local district at-
up detained during the
for the 19 — eight
to neighbouring Serbs
ained the three Friday
of the group. Gora
and is currently being
based in Croatia, who
r of minority Serbs at
day.

gains strength by surprise

(AP) — Just when
Bonnie regained her
ginia Coast, the wind
boats from their way-
to 300,000 homes. Ev-
are caught by sur-
r offices for the night
up steam, but a storm
hurricane again. "We
ensify into a storm and
with wind to find a
a strange phenomenon
resort city," says a com-
ment. In the area, the
2-year-old girl was kil-
lucky County near the
tree fell on her head,
ear-old man in Myra
electrocuted Wednesday
after his apartment col-
lapsed. The storm again
son, the storm again
rm when winds dropped
ph to 112 kph. At 5 p.m.
ie was about 100 miles
land. Nova Scotia at
27 kph.

z musician er dies

musician and teacher
who performed along-
s pianists, has died at
s agency. ATS report-
d western Swiss town
veral recordings with
e Bolling and with
mpal. With Bolling and
3 a best-selling disc of
the Jazz Piano, and two
ing for Bolling and
another hit record
d Jazz Piano. Heiger
bandleader Horace Sil-
quintet which later be-
Messengers. But Heller
the past few years, he
history at the University
lege in Montreal. Home-
S said he died last Fri-
e ceremony near Fri-
day.

orker found dead as stabbed

ng British volunteer
le in the central Amer-
bed, the Foreign Office
ot. 27, from Ontario,
ad Friday in bushes in
Belize. Britain's former
body was taken to a hos-
for an autopsy to estab-
the young volunteer.
The young volunteer
arity Raleigh Internat-
since June. Soldiers
ze were called in to
return from a shopping
of the country. Monday,
ie its group of 17 volun-
young woman was kil-
Robertson-MacLeod
ation, and that there
liers in the area. Belize
city since 1981 and is
Commonwealth. Raleigh
1984, has sent around
150 expeditions to the

World News



A flooded village in Savar, 25 kilometres north of Bangladesh capital of Dhaka is seen from a helicopter. Floods ravaging two-thirds of the country for weeks have killed over 400 people and left millions marooned (Reuters photo)

Bangladesh steps up battle against floods

DHAKA (R) — Flood-stricken Bangladesh Saturday called in security forces to help save dykes and railway lines, almost the only form of land transport still functioning after the virtual collapse of the road system. Railway engineers toiled through Friday to protect the line between Dhaka and the southern port city of Chittagong, which has been partly inundated by floodwater, officials said.

Railway public relations director Mostafa Jamil said floodwater was flowing over tracks at 16 points, six of them in critical condition. But he said the tracks had been raised in three places to keep the trains moving.

"As of now the services are intact except that trains are moving at restricted speed and hours behind schedule," he told Reuters.

The army had already been trying to protect embankments in Dhaka and elsewhere for weeks by dumping sandbags and erecting bamboo walls to hold off flood waters.

"We have asked for a wider mobilisation, round-the-clock watch and necessary use of

available manpower and resources," said one home ministry official.

Those who could afford it were opting to fly to domestic destinations in major cities while the vast majority had resorted to boats, transport officials said.

But trains were the main carrier of goods, including grains for food, from the country's two ports at Chittagong and Mongla, and authorities said extra trains would be brought into service.

Disaster management officials say the floods have killed more than 400 people, destroyed crops worth \$300 million and caused heavy damage to infrastructure.

Despite pledges of almost \$700 million in emergency foreign aid since the floods began in July, almost none has arrived, the officials said.

Some 25 million people across two-thirds of the country have been severely hit by the worst flooding in 10 years, they said.

Major floods in 1988 killed more than 5,000 people.

Over 114,000 people have contracted diarrhoea, caused

by polluted water and rotten food, and at least 77 have died from it. Others have died from drowning, snake bites, collapsing houses and electrocution.

Bangladesh Saturday was anxiously awaiting relief supplies, but only 100 plastic rolls for tents had arrived from Japan Friday night, government officials said. A consignment of medicine donated by Japan was also expected soon.

The government, which has appealed for more than \$681 million in emergency flood aid, has received aid pledges from the United States, Canada, Germany, Australia and Japan.

The head of the U.N. Environment Programme expressed "deep concern" for the people of Bangladesh, saying they were in urgent need of help.

Asked whether the Environment Programme would be providing fresh funds to Bangladesh, executive director Klaus Topfer said: "I really believe this is not a direct possibility."

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the floods had been worse than expected, causing immense suffering to millions

of people. Saturday, Hasina joined other leaders of her ruling Awami League in making bread for flood victims in the capital.

"She herself made and baked bread at the party's central office and handed it to the victims," her press officer said.

Forecasters said Saturday the floods were unlikely to recede over the next 15 days and could get worse in some districts including Dhaka.

The floods were being constantly fed by water coming down the Himalayas through rivers shared by India and Bangladesh.

"But the discharge of water into the Bay of Bengal is slow because of an unusual high tide at sea," one official said.

The Rome-based Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) attributed the floods in Bangladesh and other Asian countries to La Niña, the destructive twin of the El Niño weather phenomenon which caused widespread drought last year.

The FAO said Friday that much of Asia was likely to face food shortages in coming months as a result of floods.

Overwhelmed Yeltsin offers olive branch of power to parliament

MOSCOW (AFP) — Under unprecedented pressure to resign, a beleaguered President Boris Yeltsin suggested Saturday he would cede some of his powers to ensure a smooth confirmation hearing for his heir apparent, Viktor Chernomyrdin.

Taking the cue, Chernomyrdin appeared on national television to urge Russians not to panic amid the furious financial storm whipping the country since he had both their life savings and the ruble firmly under his control.

Exactly what type of control that might be, however, was causing some concern in the West, with a top International Monetary Fund official warning sternly that Chernomyrdin must not roll back the clock on reform.

Yeltsin enjoys nearly tsar-like authority under the 1993 constitution that was tailor-made for the Russian president. The opposition-led state Duma, the lower house of parliament, has been little more than a spirited debating club as a result.

But the president's parliamentary envoy, Alexander Kotenkov, for the first time Saturday said Yeltsin had bowed to lawmakers and agreed that Russia's basic

law was "not ideal" in its current form.

Kotenkov said Yeltsin had given his blessing to several constitutional amendments, one of which would grant more power to the cabinet.

Yeltsin wants Chernomyrdin's government "to independently lead its politics within the framework of the Russian constitution," ITAR-TASS quoted Kotenkov as saying.

Lawmakers found themselves in an unprecedented bargaining position after Yeltsin, on Aug. 23, sacked the technocratic government of Sergei Kiriyenko and reappointed Chernomyrdin as cabinet chief only five months after giving the burly Soviet energy minister the boot.

The Duma is due to hold confirmation hearings over his candidacy Monday.

While Chernomyrdin's industrial policy is more to the Duma's taste than the tight monetarism of Kiriyenko, lawmakers have dug in their heels — they want Yeltsin's powers, and several top cabinet assignments as well.

Sensing both the Duma's resolve and the catastrophe that would descend in Russia were it to battle against an economic meltdown without a confirmed government, the Kremlin

Saturday said Yeltsin is prepared to listen.

"Politics are a huge compromise, and to take an uncompromising position in a period of crisis is immoral," Interfax quoted Yeltsin's envoy as saying.

While repeating Yeltsin's pledge on national television Friday not to resign before his term is up in 2000, Kotenkov said Yeltsin has given his blessing to several amendments that may be drafted over the next month.

These changes, while in effect, might not entered into the constitution for another two years, Kotenkov added.

Yeltsin, visibly shaken by the unparalleled comic crisis that resulted in his decision to effectively devalue the ruble, Friday brushed aside furious speculation that he was ready to resign.

But Yeltsin conceded that he would like to see Chernomyrdin, reappointed as cabinet chief Aug. 23, to take over some of the burden of running state affairs.

Last Monday, Yeltsin in a dramatic announcement told the nation that Chernomyrdin, 60, had all the right qualities to succeed him as president of Russia.

As he negotiates a new power-sharing agreement with lawmakers this week-

end, Chernomyrdin has also taken on the type of leadership role that got him sacked as prime minister last March.

"Taking into account people's anxiety over their savings, we have decided to guarantee safety of deposits of private citizens in full," Chernomyrdin said firmly in televised remarks Saturday.

"I'd like to say again to depositors of commercial banks: Don't worry. You can receive your deposits. Your interests will not be infringed upon," he said.

Chernomyrdin did not elaborate how the Central Bank, whose hard currency reserves last week shrank to a meagre \$13.4 billion, intends to cover the deposits.

The prospects of a leftist government and Chernomyrdin's pledges to revive Russian industry have frightened several western leaders.

IMF managing director Michel Camdessus Friday warned Russia faces "disaster" if Chernomyrdin rolls back on free-market policies.

U.S. President Clinton, due in Moscow for summit with Yeltsin Tuesday, cautioned that Chernomyrdin had "do the disciplined, hard things."

Serbs announce mass grave found in Kosovo

BELGRADE (AFP) — A mass grave has been found in Kosovo containing the bodies of 22 Serbs killed by ethnic Albanian separatists last month, the Serbian interior ministry said Saturday.

According to confessions obtained from separatists, the 22 Serbs were shot and their bodies burned, the ministry said.

"Several dozen" members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) were killed during a Serbian police operation which led to the discovery of the mass grave, according to a ministry communiqué carried by Tanjug news agency.

The ministry described the grave as a virtual "crematorium".

It was uncovered

Thursday near Klecka, some 30 kilometres south of Pristina, during a Serbian police operation in which two KLA members were captured.

The two, Lup Mazreku and Bekim Mazreku from Malisevo, told police that 22 Serbs had been executed in the sector in July, the ministry said.

Other Serbs and ethnic Albanians kidnapped by the KLA were still held in the region, the communiqué quoted the two as saying.

An investigation confirmed that KLA "terrorists" shot the Serbs and burned their bodies, it added.

In Pristina, the Serbian Information Centre said that Serb police had "liqui-

dated seven (ethnic Albanian) terrorists" Saturday near Klinka, in western Kosovo.

The seven KLA members had attacked Serbian security forces in Donja Susica, police said. Security forces suffered no casualties during the two-hour engagement.

Fighting in Kosovo has claimed 700 lives since late February, more than 600 of them ethnic Albanians.

Government losses totalled 66 Serb policemen and 22 Yugoslav army troops, official sources indicated.

The army magazine Vojska reported in its latest edition that 26 Serb and Montenegro civilians had been killed by the KLA during the same period.

Mother Teresa's successor comes to terms with challenges

CALCUTTA, India (AP) — Mother Teresa's successor doesn't have her own business card for visitors. She hands out Mother Teresa's.

"The fruit of SILENCE is Prayer/The fruit of PRAYER is Faith/The fruit of FAITH is Love/The fruit of LOVE is Service/The fruit of SERVICE is Peace... Mother Teresa," the card says.

It's not easy following the saintly founder of the Missionaries of Charity order. But Sister Nirmala, the little-known, soft-spoken nun elected last year to lead the group, is firmly in control.

"This is an awesome responsibility," Sister Nirmala said in an interview. "... But just trusting

in God and his grace for the present, moment by moment, I could accept" the burden.

"Difficulties are a part of life. I would not consider them as difficulties to crush, but challenges to face and to grow," she added, sitting under a large wooden cross in a tiny anteroom at the order's headquarters.

She was born Nirmala Joshi into a family of Brahmins, the traditional Hindu priestly caste. She was educated by Christian missionaries in the eastern city of Patna, but remained a Hindu until age 24, when she heard of Mother Teresa's works and converted to Roman Catholicism.

She was one of the first

nuns of her order to head a foreign mission when she went to Panama. Later, she headed missions in Europe and the United States.

She returned to Calcutta to head the order's Contemplative Wing, which deals with spiritual matters. Six months before Mother Teresa's death, she was elected superior-general by a conference of 120 nuns.

Friends describe her as humble, simple, yet decisive. "Sister Nirmala may look weak and docile, but she is very firm."

She is all there — just like Mother. She said Sunita Kumar, a close friend of Mother Teresa's for three decades.

Rioting hits Indonesian town for a second day

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Mobs burned a warehouse Saturday on the second day of rioting in a coastal town where thousands of fishermen attacked Chinese-owned cars and houses, newspapers reported. At least 33 people were arrested.

The violence in the Java island town of Cilacap had dwindled by the afternoon. Security forces patrolled past shops and restaurants, shuttered by their owners for fear of more unrest.

Friday, hundreds of police and soldiers were unable to prevent the mob rampaging until late in the evening. The Jakarta Post reported. The rioters were angry over low wages and alleged corrup-

tion. Rioters torched a shrimp warehouse Saturday morning, reported the Suara Pembaruan, a daily newspaper.

The unrest was the latest in a string of riots this week around Indonesia, which is suffering economic turmoil that has stripped millions of their jobs and pushed up prices.

The ethnic Chinese minority dominates the economy and has often been blamed for the crisis. Chinese-owned property was targeted in more widespread violence that led to the downfall in May of former President Suharto after 32 years of autocratic rule.

Authorities arrested 33 people but there were no reports of injuries in Cilacap, 435 kilometres east of Jakarta, the capital.

The rioting began when the fishermen burned at least 10 trawlers moored in the fishing port near the town, the Post reported. They then moved into Cilacap, burning and damaging four cars, 10 motorcycles and 20 houses belonging to ethnic Chinese.

Soldiers blocked thoroughfares but were outnumbered and had to call for backup from neighbouring towns.

The crews of the fishing boats said they were exploited by their employers and had not received a pay raise in six years.

The fishermen are paid 2,000 rupiah (18 U.S. cents) a day, a salary below the minimum wage, the Post quoted Cilacap police chief Col. Andi Lolo as saying.

The protesters also complained that port officials extorted money from them.

Aircraft rerouted to avoid runaway balloon

OTTAWA (AP) — A runaway weather balloon floating over the North Atlantic is proving a tough target for some of Canada's top guns.

The balloon, a 100-metre-high unstaffed research station used to observe weather patterns, can be seen from about 70 kilometres away.

Jet fighters fired more than 1,000 rounds into the helium-filled balloon Thursday but it remained aloft. The air force hopes the now-leaking balloon will eventually come down.

Meanwhile, Nav Canada, the country's air traffic regulator, is

rerouting air traffic around the balloon.

"It's at an altitude and an area where transatlantic flights pass nearby," Nav Canada spokesman Conrad Bellehumeur said Friday. "It won't cause delays, it's just a matter of having planes travel 190 kilometres farther north or farther south."

The balloon is not equipped with transponders that emit navigation signals to alert airlines to its presence.

Aurora patrol planes were keeping tabs on the wayward balloon Friday, said Maj.

Roland Lavoie, an air force spokesman stationed at 1st Canadian Air Division in Winnipeg.

Late Friday afternoon, the balloon was more than 1,100 kilometres southeast of Greenland and drifting at a speed of approximately 90 kph towards British airspace.

Lavoie said British officials have been alerted and suggested Canadian authorities would leave it to them.

The CF-18 fighters sent out to down the balloon with 20mm cannons are also equipped with air-to-air mis-

siles, but Lavoie said the pilots refrained from resorting to heavier firepower.

"Citizens would not have appreciated having a missile blowing over their heads," said Lavoie. "Also, it might be overkill — spending a couple of hundred thousand dollars on a missile to shoot down a balloon that's drifting away."

The 25-story balloon, which flattened out would cover five football fields, was launched before dawn Monday from Vanscoy, Saskatchewan, just outside Saskatoon, to measure ozone levels over Canada.

U.S. academic questions Sydney water contamination

SYDNEY (R) — An American academic created a stir Saturday by questioning whether dangerous parasites found in Sydney's water supply might not in fact be harmless algal blooms.

But Sydney Water stood by its tests showing record levels of the dangerous parasites cryptosporidium and giardia and said city residents should carry on boiling their water.

More than three million Sydneysiders have been forced this week to boil all drinking and cooking water for one

minute because of contamination in Sydney's main water reservoir and in two filtration plants.

The contamination crisis, the second in a month, has been an embarrassment for the harbour city just two years from its hosting of the 2000 Olympic Games.

Dr. Jerry Ongerth, a visiting fellow in the civil engineering department of the University of New South Wales, told the Sydney Morning Herald that levels of the parasites were "as high as you would find in pure

raw sewage, probably higher".

He said his own tests showed that many of the organisms were algal and looked like cryptosporidium or giardia. Others could not be identified for sure, but could be innocuous algae.

"There are so many organisms out in nature that you cannot possibly test for all of them," he said.

Ongerth, who also holds a post at the University of Washington, is not questioning the public health advice that all drinking water should be boiled.

But his theory could explain why the contamination has caused no increase in illness despite record cryptosporidium levels and anecdotal evidence that many Sydney people have carried on drinking unboiled tap water.

Tests carried out by the New South Wales state Health Department Thursday showed more than 9,000 cryptosporidium oocysts or eggs per 100 litres of water at one filtration plant — nine times the previous highest level during the crisis.

By way of comparison,

400,000 people fell sick during a cryptosporidium contamination in the U.S. city of Milwaukee five years ago and around 100 died, yet cryptosporidium levels were later put at only around 20 oocysts per 100 litres of water.

Ongerth, a former adviser to Sydney Water, told Reuters Sydney was one of the few cities in the world to be monitoring its water supply for cryptosporidium, and as such was doing everything right.

But he was not convinced that Sydney water was dangerous.

Cryptosporidium and giardia are usually carried in animal faeces, yet there was no sign of high levels of faecal bacteria in the Warragamba Dam that supplies most of Sydney's water needs.

"I'm convinced that the degree of hazard to the people of Sydney is modest, although I don't see how the problem could have been handled differently," Ongerth said.

He said the focus might have to switch to traditional monitoring tools, such as measuring the level of bacteria and checking

the purity of water catchments, if scientific analysis of water samples remained inconclusive.

Sydney Water spokesman Rod Metcalfe said the authority had examined Ongerth's theory, but was sticking by its test results. He said cryptosporidium parvum, the dangerous species of the parasite, had definitely been identified in the samples.

"We're aware of the claim and we've looked at it, but we're more than confident that in this instance there is cryptosporidium," he said.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab print daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

Jordan Times مؤسسة صحفية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية

Chairman of the Board of Directors
Abdel Salam Tarawneh

Vice Chairman & Director General
Mohammad Amad

Executive Editor
Abdullah Hasanat

Responsible Editor
Elia Nasrallah

Editorial and Advertising offices
Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman

Telephones: 5684311, 5699634, 5667171, 5603585

Facsimile: Editorial: 5696183, Advertising: 5693337

E-mail: jtimes@go.com.jo

Web Site: http://www.access2arabia.com/jordantimes/

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays. Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times Advertising Department.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Economic adjustment still needs IMF

Dr. Fahed Fanek

THERE IS consensus among observers and economists that the process of economic adjustment in Jordan has not been completed. There is still much to be done, especially when the process almost came to a standstill during recent years. Deficit in the budget before foreign grants, which at one time was narrowed to around 3.5 per cent of GDP, started to climb up again and may exceed seven per cent in the current fiscal year. Restructuring of certain sectors such as health, water, and energy did not take place unless we take changing the description of some public sector corporations to shareholding companies wholly owned by the government as a structural change. As far as privatisation is concerned, the process did not take off despite too much noise about it. All the announced deadlines for the privatisation of public sector entities passed without action, including Jordan Telecommunication Company, the Royal Jordanian Airlines, and Aqaba Railway.

Under this lack of action on behalf of the government it was not strange to lose economic growth without gaining real adjustment. It was enough for us to listen

to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank officials commending the Jordanian government for its sound policies and the Jordanian economy for outstanding results, until time made us realise that there were actually no sound policies and that the results were not as good as was assumed.

Now we come to a crucial question regarding the future of adjustment programme, as we have a new government and we are getting very close to the expiry date of the present programme 1992-1998. Should we carry on with a renewed programme of economic reform in cooperation with the IMF or should we think of ourselves as having graduated from IMF supervision and can follow our own ideas from now on without consultations with the IMF and the World Bank.

As for the new government, it is evident that it is not revolutionary. The presence of Dr. Michel Marto in the Ministry of Finance, Dr. Nabil Ammari in the Ministry of Planning, Dr. Ziad Fariz in the Central Bank and Dr. Taher Kana'an heading the economic team is a strong indication that the economic adjustment programme will continue, and that the World Bank and the IMF

will not be relieved from their responsibility to assist Jordan technically and financially.

It is worth mentioning that the adoption of an adjustment programme in cooperation with the IMF is no more a matter of necessity. All our debts have already been rescheduled. What remained of the debt is not eligible for rescheduling either because it belongs to the IMF and the World Bank, or because it was borrowed after the cut-off date of January 1, 1989. Adopting a programme is now an option which we may take out of choice to serve our best interests.

Jordan can benefit a lot from continuing with an economic programme with the blessing of the IMF. Such benefits include obtaining more concessions from major creditors, receiving more generous grants from donor countries, using the expertise of the IMF staff, securing a measure of international credibility of Jordan's economic performance, and enhancing potential investments from Arab and foreign sources. All these and other benefits would not be available in the current circumstances without an adjustment programme approved by the IMF.

New role for NAM?

THE NON-ALIGNED Movement (NAM) meeting in South Africa is an opportunity for 160 or so countries of the movement to debate an array of global and regional issues. Ever since its inception in 1961, when the first conference was convened in Belgrade, the NAM has been busy finding its own identity among the various international fora. That was relatively easy during the Cold War, when the international community was almost evenly divided into two major blocs. With the demise of the Soviet Union and the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and the subsequent emergence of the U.S. as the dominant world power, NAM member states started a new process that aims to articulate a new mission and sense of direction.

While on the surface of things, the world is no longer bi-polar in the traditional sense of the word, there is no doubt that the comity of nations are still divided on more than one front. Different and opposing political persuasions and ideologies still divide many capitals. This is not to mention the deep division between countries on the economic, social and cultural levels. It would be naive, therefore, to presume that the world is uniform to the extent that there is no more role for the NAM to play.

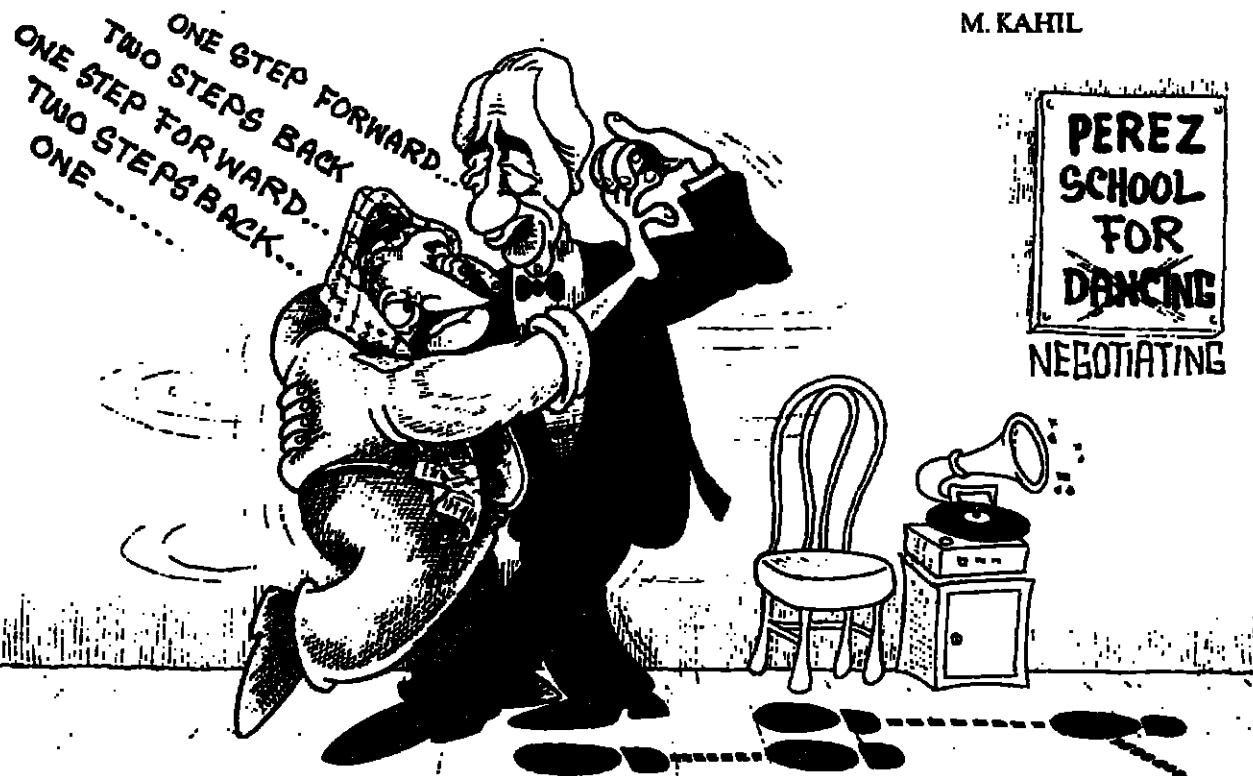
The international community is still deeply multi-cultural, religious and ideological. The economic orientations of states are also varied considerably. Even with the advent of the global economy, the debate still ranges on whether the economic interdependence of countries should be oriented solely to free economy and private enterprise, where state-controlled economies have no role to play.

The countries of the world are also deeply divided on human rights, the unilateral use of force and the sanctions regime to which the U.N. Security Council often resorts, to the detriment of the interests of peoples everywhere. Accordingly, the agenda of the NAM is not so shallow as some would suggest. Rather, it is replete with hard-core issues on which the world is still deeply divided. This reinforces the proposition that the NAM has a major role to play in international affairs. If the movement is unable, due to the diversity of its members, to agree on a set of policies on issues like globalisation, the so-called "new world order" and reform of the U.N. system, the least it could do at this important summit, which coincides with the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights, is to adapt a new set of ethics that should govern the conduct of nations in the 21st century.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I'S Fahed Fanek comes to the conclusion that, in the recent turmoil surrounding growth-rate figures, the ex-government's true failure lay in its inability to defend itself against an over-zealous press, rather than in a malicious miscalculation of growth-rate estimates. For the years 1991, 1992 and 1994, contends Fanek, the government over-estimated economic growth in Jordan, whilst its figures for 1993, 1995 and 1996 were too low. A cumulative growth-rate for those six years, based on these government statistics, would amount to 40.9 per cent, hence, argues the writer, there was neither a huge discrepancy to the actual 44.6 per cent economic growth Jordan enjoyed during this time, nor could the Majali government have been accused of inflating the figures, had it defended itself rightly. In general the growth-rate spoke for the government's reform programme, says Fanek, but instead of standing up to press criticism of its performance, the ex-government sought to pass legislation which would restrict press-freedom, banning subjects from public debates and introducing severe punishments in cases of violation.

AL DUSTOUR'S Oreb Rantawi commented on the sanctions imposed on three Arab countries, Libya, Sudan, and Iraq, and claimed that the inhuman sanctions victimising around 50 million people are coming to an end. Rantawi called on these countries to act wisely to avoid the continuity of sanctions which have proved to be unpopular among the world community. Rantawi reviewed the three countries' positions and the possibilities of the lifting of the sanctions on each: The United Nations Security Council has decided to suspend sanctions on Libya once it hands the two suspected Libyan bombers over for trial in the Netherlands hence it is all up to Libya to clean its name. The Sudan bombing was a blessing in disguise, because Sudan explained its stand on terrorism and answered all accusations made by the United States. Leaked reports, according to Rantawi, says the U.S. wants to open a channel of talks with the Sudanese regime on security issues which means the beginning of the end of sanctions. Rantawi added that the resignation of Scott Ritter from UNSCOM and the fiasco following claims that he was a CIA and Mossad agent is proof that UNSCOM is in its final days. The ball is in the Arab nation's field, he said. They better play it well.



Washington Watch

Dr. James J. Zogby

U.S. bombings backfire

IN THE MOST recent round fought between the United States and those shadowy murderers who bombed the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the winner, tragically, may well have been the terrorists.

The surprise U.S. retaliatory bombings of targets in Sudan and Afghanistan has played into the hands of those who are waging this ugly war.

Throughout the Arab world, the U.S. action has been roundly condemned, with our strongest allies remaining ominously silent. The United States is criticised principally for taking the law into its own hands, without consideration for international law. By undercutting its claim to be the upholder of international law and by resorting to what some have termed as the "law of the jungle," the U.S.'s actions are now deemed as no different than those of the terrorists it condemns.

If Secretary of State Madeleine Albright is right and this is the beginning of "the unfortunate war of the future" in which "we are to be engaged for the long-haul," then it is imperative that the United States understand the nature of this battle and what is required to win it.

For starters, the United States should recognise that this struggle must be fought on many fronts. It is only partly a military conflict.

Terrorism has political, psychological and military objectives. Not only do its practitioners seek to take lives in horrendous acts of murder, they also seek to promote fear and insecurity. It is also vitally important to terrorists that they provoke a response, a violent repressive response, which they hope will expose the weaknesses of their adversary and cause a negative political reaction, winning support for their cause.

As the dust settles in the aftermath of the U.S. cruise missile strikes, it appears that this is exactly what has occurred. While the United States had the moral high ground on which to stand following the brutal assault on its two African embassies, all that ended with the attacks on Sudan and Afghanistan.

Arabs and Muslims were horrified at the outrages committed by the terrorists, and they continue to be angered by those who use religion to justify their murderous deeds, thus harming the meaning and image of religion itself. But the Arab World also understandably harbours deep fears and mistrust of the United States. There is an alienation from the United States born of a double standard, which the United States applies to the Middle East, and to Muslims in general: While the United States insists that Arab countries adhere to international law, Israel has for decades been allowed to get away with murder in Lebanon and in the Occupied Territories. There is also growing anger over the severe economic sanctions that continue to be applied disproportionately to Arab and Muslim countries, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of thousands.

As a result of these deeply felt grievances, Arabs are unwilling to give the U.S. "carte blanche" to operate in their region. If the current administration has a credibility problem domestically, it would be fair to say that its credibility problem in the Arab world is twice as serious. Of course the United States can, if it chooses, ignore these Arab concerns and act to defend itself at will. It is, after all, the world's superpower

and it can do whatever it wants to do. But it does so at great risk — especially if it seeks to wage a war against an enemy which, while using repugnant means, claims to be fighting in the name of those very injustices and inequities that have produced the alienation of the Arab world from the United States.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright may very well believe it when she says that "we stand for freedom and rule of law and democracy and that's what [the terrorists] don't believe in and so [they] have decided that we are the enemy." But her words ring hollow and produce anger in the Arab World.

By ignoring the reality of Arab grievances, and by failing to address them, the United States has ignored the political and psychological fronts of the battle it is waging. Just as military planners learn the physical terrain of a potential battlefield, it is imperative that the political and psychological terrain of this battlefield against terrorism be understood as well.

By ignoring them and acting violently and unilaterally last week, the United States has created a Middle East that is more hostile and dangerous than it was even one week ago. Whether or not Osama Bin Laden was, in fact, the culprit behind the attacks on the U.S. embassies, he has emerged, in the wake of the U.S. strikes, having won significant support from an angry Arab street. What the United States has won for itself is only outrage and condemnation. U.S. interests and allies are now more vulnerable and more at risk.

LETTERS

It's not that simple

To the Editor:

I cannot agree more with some of Bala Lemak's comments on American perceptions towards the Arab World ("Wrong is Wrong," Letter to the Editor, Aug. 30). But I am prompted to raise some questions to Mr/Ms Lemak, whose opinions, I am sure are shared by a majority of American people:

1. Do the American people understand why people like Osama Bin Laden spring up and immediately get accepted as a hero by many? If they don't, then try this: People like Bin Laden are backed because of what many people see as their courage to stand up to injustice and the failure of international laws and conventions to redress the grievances of the oppressed. That courage is missing on the part of many governments in this region, many of which cannot say much about their people's faith in them either. (It partly explains the immense popularity Iraq's Saddam Hussein enjoyed when he challenged the United States. If Saddam has lost some of that popularity since then, it is mainly because of what many see as his climb-down).

2. Do the American people understand why U.S. embassies and interests are picked as favourite targets for extremist attacks, particularly when they believe that their country has no direct involvement in the issues of the region?

If they don't, then try this: Although the United States may not be "directly" involved as an oppressor in the Middle East equation, its "indirect" actions cause more harm than "direct" involvement by its unreserved political, military, economic and moral support for Israel. Most people in this region are convinced that had it not been for the U.S. support, Israel would not have dared to challenge the international community and world public opinion by continuing to occupy Arab territories and systematically eliminating physical realities of Palestinian territorial claims. The U.S. approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict has made Washington the real villain in the equation. People here grit their teeth in sheer frustration whenever they hear of American vetoes of UN resolutions critical of Israel. It is no exaggeration to say that the U.S. policy is seen by many as a declaration of war against Arab rights just as Americans see Bin Laden's anti-U.S. threats as a declaration of war.

3. Do the American people understand why extremist actions in this region are always given an "Islamist" tinge?

If they don't, then try this: Every political ideology and philosophy — indigenous and foreign — has been tried and failed in this region to address the root causes of people's frustration. It is only natural then for people to embrace what is very much here and what they are born with — Islam as a religion which offers solace and comfort. Indeed there are a handful of people who twist Islamic teachings to their extremist likings, but it is misplaced to assert that the support they have is as good (or as bad) as American Jews' endorsement of Israeli policies against the Arabs.

4. Finally, do the American people understand why they, citizens of a country which is founded on the noble principles of freedom and fraternity, are finding themselves as targets of other people who are also seeking to enjoy the same rights and freedoms?

If they don't, then try this: A majority of American people are spoon-fed half truths and half-cooked analyses by the American media, which, despite their declared commitment to accuracy and objectivity, pick their cue from what has come to be established as standing U.S. policy. As such, the American public at large are not fully informed of the realities on the ground in the Middle East. Indeed, how many Americans would actually think about the plight of a 12-member Palestinian family who see what was their home in the morning turned into bulldozed rubble by the afternoon? And for many in this part of the world there is little difference between those rubble and the wreckage of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

'Inad Khairallah
U.A.E.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

r responsibility to...
ally.
he adoption of an...
ion with the IMF...
ll our debts have...
ned of the debt is...
because it belongs...
ary 1, 1989. Adopt...
which we may take...
ists.
a continuing with...
the IMF. Such...
more concessions...
re generous grants...
pertise of the IMF...
ernational credibility...
ice, and enhancing...
and foreign sources...
id not be available...
out an adjustment...

ERS
at simple

h some of Balu Lema...
perceptions toward...
Wrong." Letter to...
n prompted to raise...
ak, whose opinions...
rity of American peo...
ple understand why...
in spring up and im...
ro by many...
is: People like Bin L...
what many people se...
to injustice and the...
conventions to redre...
sed. That courage...
governments in the...
ay much about their...
r. (It partly explai...
Iraq's Saddam. Hu...
nged the United St...
that popularity...
hat many see as in...

sople understand...
are picked as...
ks, particularly...
has no direct...
er...
? This: Although...
ntly involved in...
st equation...
than "direct...
al, military...
Most people...
t not been...
ave dared to...
y and world...
Arab...
g physical...
ums. The U.S...
has made...
People here...
on whenever...
JN...
ion to say...
a declaration...
nians see...
ation of...
a people...
region are...

this: Every...
indigenous...
ed in this...
ple's frustra...
e to embrace...
ey are born...
solace and...
people...
emist likin...
he support...
erican Jew...
the Arabs...
American...
country whic...
freedom and...
targets of...
by the same...

try this: A...
spoon-fed...
by the Amer...
clared comm...
pick their...
as standin...
public at la...
ities on the...
how many...
the plight...
o see what...
to bulldoze...
any in this...
se between...
J.S. embass...
Inad Khair...
L.A.

welcomes letters...
nders on any...
interded for...
e writer's...
as well. Nam...
est but only...
ers are subj...

Features

Tracking the killer virus

'9 June, 1918. In the trench, wrecked by last night's bombardment, all is quiet now; the artillery is taking a rest...A dozen conscripts were killed last night, their first night in the line. They are lying in a corner of the trench now, waiting to be moved to the rear for burial' — Arthur Lapointe

By Gwynne Dyer

ARTHUR LAPOINTE, whose diaries are among the best French-language memoirs of the World War I, was a lucky man. He served three years in the trenches, and survived the war without a scratch. Then he went home to Mont-Joli, Quebec — and learned that all seven of his brothers and sisters had died of the Spanish influenza in the month before he arrived.

Eleven million people were killed in the World War I. Between 20 and 40 million were killed by the 'Spanish flu' in the autumn of 1918, and we have no assurance that the same thing could not happen again tomorrow. So at Longyearbyen in far northern Norway, they are opening up a frozen mass grave to see if they can find and identify the virus that did the killing.

"If we know the genetic structure of the virus, it can help us produce a vaccine," explained Dr. Tom Bergan of Oslo University — and added: "There is no chance in the world that there is a viable virus in there." Nevertheless, the excavation is taking place under strict containment rules: an air-tight

inflatable tent has been erected over the pit, and the scientists who enter through the air-lock wear 'space-suits' with an outside air supply.

The three-week operation, which began on the 18th, aims to recover tissue samples from six Norwegian coal-miners who died of the Spanish flu in October, 1918. It is a triumph of medical detective work, for until now scientists had virtually given up hope of learning just what the 1918 virus was. Previous attempts to find remnants of it in Icelandic and Alaskan graves had produced disappointing results: the ground was too warm, and few traces of the virus survived.

Five years ago, however, Kirsty Duncan, a medical geographer at the University of Windsor in Ontario, discovered the 1918 diary of the chief engineer at the coal-mine on Spitzbergen Island, a glacier-covered Norwegian territory only 800 km from the North Pole. It recorded the deaths of seven miners from the Spanish flu, and of their burial in the churchyard at Longyearbyen.

Duncan set about getting permission from their families to exhume the bodies, and finally six of the seven agreed. Last year she sur-

veyed the grave with radar and determined that the bodies were well below the permafrost, preserved at a temperature between minus 10 and minus 1 Celsius (plus 14 to 30 Fahrenheit). So this year she has come back with a four-nation team of microbiologists, virologists and geologists to dig up the remains.

It will be up to 18 months before laboratory analysis of tissue samples from the miners yields a clear picture of the genetic structure of the 1918 virus, even if the team does recover it successfully. But already two conclusions seem likely: that it was a 'shift' rather than a 'drift' version of the influenza virus, and that it had the ability to attack the entire body rather than just the respiratory system.

The influenza virus, which affects birds and animals as well as humans, has the knack of changing its surface proteins in order to fool their immune systems. Normally, these are minor mutations in the virus' coat, occurring by a process known as 'drift' — and since most people have been exposed to similar strains before, we just feel rotten for a few days while our immune systems learn to deal with the new version. But sometimes, we are

faced with a much bigger problem: 'shift.'

"Every few decades," explained Sir John Skehel of London's National Institute of Medical Research last December, "a completely new strain emerges. These emerge from animals, usually birds. The last time that happened was in 1968, when hundreds of thousands of people died in the resulting pandemic. Unfortunately, we are due for another major pandemic any time now."

Sir John was being interviewed about flu last year because we had a major scare in December: a new strain of the virus emerged in chickens in Hong Kong, and infected at least 20 people — of whom four died. And as in 1918, most of the victims were young.

All 1.4 million chickens in Hong Kong were killed in 24 hours, and in the end the scare died down. This strain of the virus, it seems, can pass from chickens to people, but does not pass easily between humans. But some day, another version as virulent as the 1918 strain will emerge.

So it's good news that scientists are starting to learn what makes some flu viruses so much deadlier than others. Two virologists at the University of Wisconsin - Madison, Yoshihiro

Kawaoka and Hideo Goto, report in this month's 'Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences' that they have identified a flu virus that is able to infect any cell in the body, and not only those in the respiratory tract.

The strain they studied is one that first appeared in the late 1920s. It is thought to be closely related to the 1918 killer: its ability to cause infection in all body tissues and not just the lungs is precisely what researchers suspect made the Spanish flu so lethal. Now the Wisconsin team has identified the surface protein (haemagglutinin) that enables this particular strain to enter and infect cells throughout the body.

If the Longyearbyen team can reconstruct the 'Spanish flu' virus, and if its trick was the same one that the Wisconsin researchers have identified in its 1920s relative, then we may never have to face another flu epidemic like the one in 1918. Otherwise, we are living on borrowed time.

The writer is a London-based journalist and historian. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Investors crazy about Internet stocks

By Isabelle Parenthoen
Agence France Presse

U.S. INVESTORS are running up the prices of Internet stocks, lured by attractive gains and the hope that the World Wide Web will be crucial to future commerce and communications.

These are fledgling, quirky enterprises that might not appear to be the safest investment bets, like cyberspace bookstore Amazon.com, software maker Intuit and Internet browser Lycos.

But companies like these have seen their share prices double in the last two weeks. On Thursday, shares in Internet media company Yahoo! Inc. shot up after announcing a per-share dividend of 15 cents instead of the Wall Street forecast of nine cents.

Profit-taking meant that at the close of trading Thursday, Yahoo! shares were down 2-3/16 at 184.

The combined market capitalisation of Amazon.com and Yahoo! — both founded in 1994 — total nearly \$10 billion: a figure that equals those of more established companies like aluminum manufacturer Alcoa and toy maker giant Mattel.

These media companies were set up by Wundt, many of them billionaires who are barely 30 years old, the same age legendary computer whiz Bill Gates was when he founded Microsoft.

The Nasdaq, the electronic exchange on which many high-tech stocks are traded, has been flying from record to record.

"I've never seen anything like this in any sector," said Andrea Williams of the investment firm Volpe Brown Whelan in San Francisco.

Most of the buying has been by individual investors ready to take risks that turn off the major mutual fund managers.

"It's becoming clear to people how integrated the Internet will be into all of our lives, from a consumer's perspective or from business' perspective," said Williams, who warned that some buying had been "indiscriminate."

"People are using these sites, they are familiar with these names, and everyone thinks he or she can make a lot of money," she added.

One pressing question is whether the companies are actually worth the billions that they trade for on the stock exchange.

Steve Horen of NationsBank Montgomery

Securities recently downgraded Amazon.com from "buy" to "hold" on the grounds that the share price was too high.

But the upward trend has been hard to resist, especially as major telecommunications firms and media groups seek to jump on the Internet bandwagon.

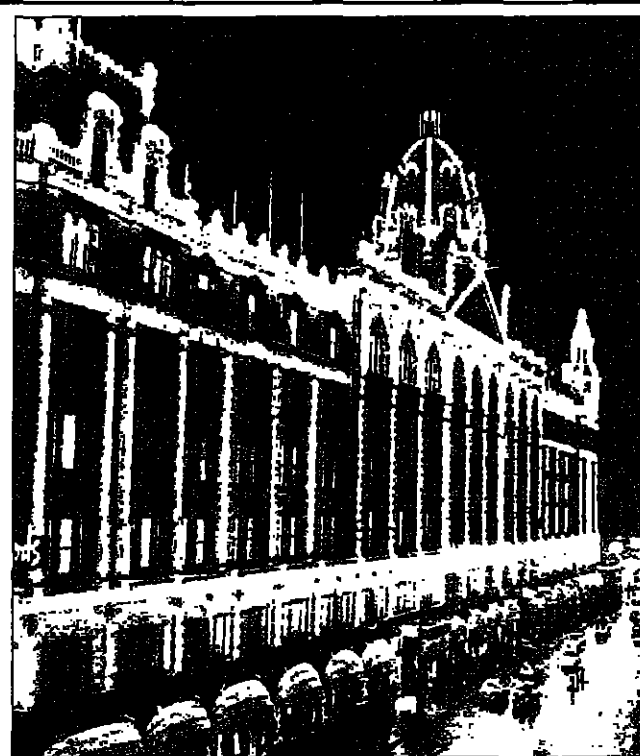
Search engines, which most people use to manoeuvre around the Web, have been the object of a virtual buying frenzy as media groups seek ways to get access to millions of Internet users.

In early June, entertainment giant Walt Disney and General Electric, which owns NBC television, announced a deal worth tens of millions of dollars for a Web "portal."

On the infrastructure side, telecommunications giant AT and T announced on June 25 that it was merging with cable operator Tele-Communications Inc. to bring cable, telephone and Internet businesses under one roof.

A week later, the Financial Times reported that AT&T had approached the world's largest Internet provider America Online (AOL) about a possible merger. The two firms have firmly declined comment.

Harrods in London (owned, of course, by an Egyptian) is just one of many reasons why England has become a favourite holiday destination for people all over the Arab World (file photo)



Arab influx enjoys British summer

By Eli Coory
Reuters

IT'S HARD to believe that tourists come to London to enjoy the British summer.

But for the hundreds of thousands of tourists from the Arab Gulf expected to visit Britain this year, the grey skies and rainy days provide a welcome oasis from the sweltering heat of their desert homes.

"It's perfect to me, as long as it doesn't get too cold," said Talal, a 14-year-old Kuwaiti, sitting on a bench at Hyde Park where many Gulf Arab visitors pass the afternoons.

From mid-July to September, when desert temperatures regularly top 45 degrees Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit), more than 218,000 tourists from the Gulf make Britain their number one holiday spot in Europe. According to the British Tourist Authority (BTA), Britain will host 222,000 visitors this year from the Gulf Arab states of Oman, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. Most will stay in London, the BTA said.

"I like the UK because the people here are more friendly than (in) other European countries," said Omar Al Khalid from Saudi Arabia. "In addition to that here we use our second language — English." "I much prefer the weather here. It is more comfortable and I can walk freely," said Nabila, a 23-year-old Kuwaiti bank employee who comes to London every year with her family.

Walking is a favourite pastime, especially at night. During the summer months the streets surrounding London's famous parks are transformed into "Little Arabia", anchored to the east by the Edgware Road — commonly known as "Jeddah High Street".

Groups of women covered head to toe in black, men in smart business suits clutching worry beads, and young teenagers sporting loud Versace shirts and high-waisted black trousers stroll along Edgware Road.

Just off London's busy shopping area of Oxford Street, Edgware Road is a main thoroughfare north of Hyde Park where Gulf tourists can peruse hometown newspapers and magazines while sharing a shisha water pipe known as hubble-bubble.

Most of the shops along Edgware Road would not be out of place in the middle of Riyadh or Doha. They offer anything from Saudi dates to videos of classic Egyptian films.

One busy perfumery, open until midnight every day, is doing brisk business selling watches featuring verses from the Koran, a potent ladies cologne called "Samira" imported from a "Swiss-Arab company" and "Fat-Magnet" pills.

A hair stylist, taking a break after a hectic day, said business booms when the Arabs come to town.

"We get Kuwaiti teenagers coming practically every night to get their hair washed and dried at 20 pounds a time," she said.

Chauffeured rolls to feed the ducks the

entrance to Hyde Park is transformed into a luxury car park stuffed with gold-plated Rolls Royces and bright red Ferrari Testarossas bearing licence plates from Dubai and Qatar.

Drivers and security guards wait for a call from their employers when they have had enough duck-feeding and roller-blading.

Sitting in circles facing the duck-filled pond or parading in front of each other on the footpaths, families spend hours in this park.

Wily entrepreneurs offering to read palms or take snapshots of the tourists holding a large snake pounce on them as do beggars hoping to take advantage of their generosity.

To escape the scrutiny of their parents, young teenagers often use mobile phones to flirt with each other even though they are often just a few feet apart.

Anxious to discuss issues confronting their homelands, most of the male Arab visitors spend some time at "Speaker's Corner" where Algerian Islamists often hold centre stage.

"But what you are saying is actually anti-Islam," shouted one Kuwaiti in the crowd.

Nearby, a man clutching a Kuwaiti passport wanted to discuss his expulsion from that country.

A home away from home other tourists tackle London with a detailed sightseeing schedule, careful not to miss Buckingham Palace or the British Museum. This is not a problem for the Arabs since London has become a second home to many of them.

In fact, most prefer to stay in apartments and houses rather than hotels where bills can be exorbitant for large families.

There are even estate agents specialising in finding them short-let flats.

This year's big drop in oil prices, the main revenue earner in the Gulf, has resulted in some belt-tightening.

"I have eight children, a large family, so a hotel is out of the question. We rent the same apartment every year, plus we can cook the foods we like," said Abdullah, a Qatari in his forties.

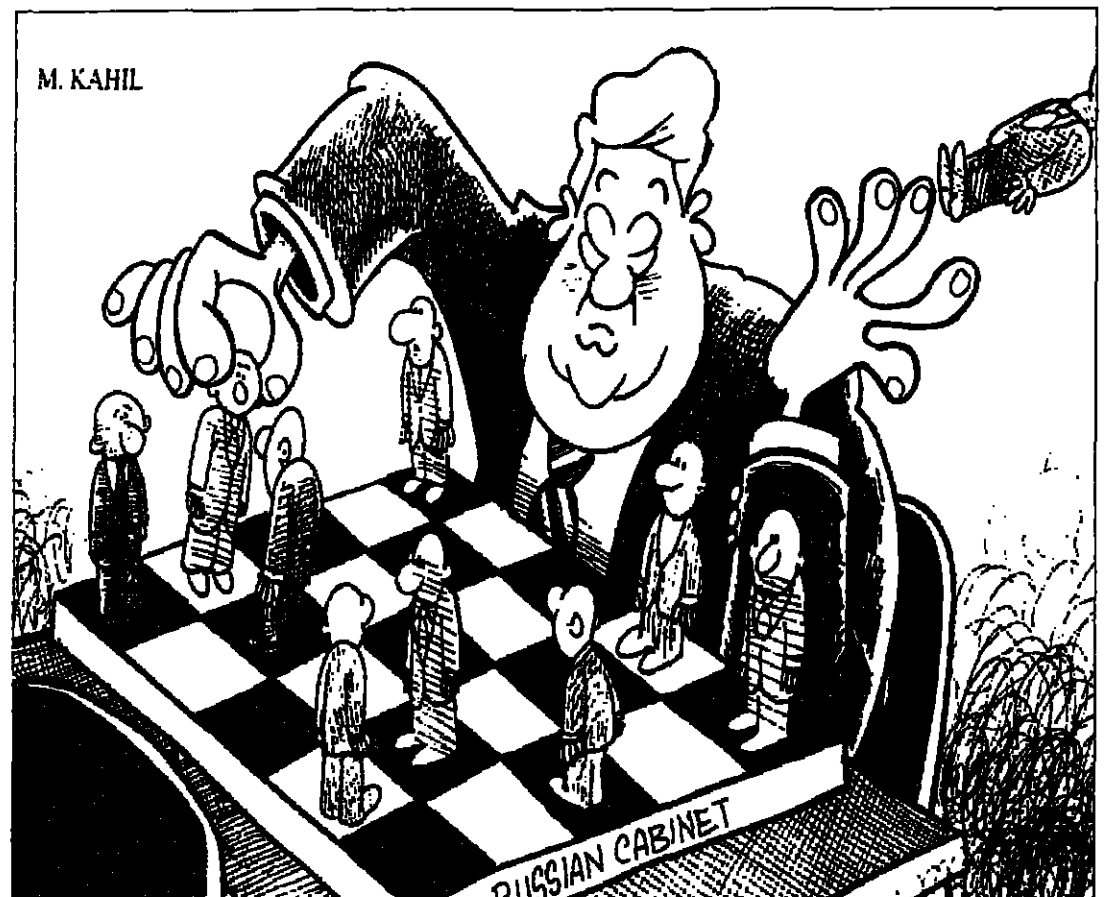
There are plenty of grocery stores selling staples like burghoul or cracked wheat to make the typical tabouleh salad, but it just as easy to find a good Lebanese restaurant, some featuring belly dancers.

Like many Americans who search out hamburgers in Paris, the Arabs prefer home cooking and shun traditional British fare.

Paul Sfeir, manager of the popular Maroush restaurant on Edgware Road, said some of his regular Arab customers come every year, at the same time every night and order the same food.

"Our customers know the menu and we know them. After a while we serve them their food at once after they sit down," Sfeir said.

But for a quick bite, there is always the nearby "HFC" or Halal Fried Chicken serving the deep fried poultry prepared from animals slaughtered according to Muslim law.



USAID programme completes study on market's need for microfinance services

By Ghaila Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A \$13.4 million USAID programme plans to start extending microfinance services to poor and low-income entrepreneurs as part of efforts to improve the performance of the private and public sectors as the Kingdom integrates into the global economy.

The four-year Access to Microfinance and Improved Policy Reform (AMIR) programme was launched by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in March to help improve Jordan's business atmosphere.

It is implemented by Chemometrics International in collaboration with USAID, the ministries of industry and trade and planning as well as the customs department.

Programme Director Stephen Wade, said the AMIR programme has concluded a diagnostic analysis with seven non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Jordan to determine the mar-

ket's needs for microfinance services.

He added that the scheme, designed to provide technical assistance and training for NGOs and banks, held workshops with major financial institutions to explore means of extending sustainable microfinance services in Jordan based on best practices worldwide.

Wade earlier said that by the end of its four-year term, AMIR programme hopes to give 25,000 loans to micro entrepreneurs — 50 per cent of which are women and 30 per cent are borrowers from outside Amman.

Wade said the programme employed a long-term advisor to work on improving the performance of the Investment Promotion Corporation (IPC) to help encourage more foreign investments necessary for the country's economic development.

"The AMIR programme wants to convert the IPC to a world class agency," said Wade, who has served as an advisor on investment promotion, export development,

micro and small businesses, commercial lending and policy reform in many countries, including Sri Lanka and Ireland.

"The most important thing is to generate capital, technical support and more opportunities for domestic investments," he added.

The AMIR programme is also working to improve Jordan's customs system through the customs department. It is also extending technical assistance to the Geneva-based World Trade Organisation (WTO) office at the Ministry of Industry and Trade to ensure smooth and enhanced accession to the WTO.

Jordan has concluded the third round of negotiations with the 131-member WTO in July after responding to demands by the organisation's members such as abolishing the supply ministry, fixing the ceiling on customs, and raising the quality of agricultural products to international standards.

Jordan, hoping to accede to the WTO next year, is in the

process of holding bilateral negotiations with its main trading partners to rally their support on some of the pending issues such as a fair grace period for the implementation of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) rules.

Wade told the Jordan Times that a consultant is meanwhile working with the government and the private sector to establish an action plan for the implementation of IPR legislation.

"The WTO office and the industry and trade ministry have been very cooperative and open to the idea of a joint approach," he said. "We want to provide a very professional analysis of the current situation so the government and the private sector can fully understand the ramifications."

Wade said the AMIR programme has begun assisting several Jordanian business associations that represent private entrepreneurs in order to become strong advocates for the implementation of policy reforms.

In May, the programme

conducted a survey that determined weaknesses and strengths of business associations in Jordan. Currently, it is assisting three of them in preparing strategic plans.

While all associations complained of lack of adequate information to be shared by members, the programme decided to link the associations' data bases via the Internet, he said.

"We will provide technical assistance and training to associations to link their data bases so each one of them would know what is in the other's library," he added.

"The speed with which Jordan reaches its economic goals will be determined by the state of mind of individuals at every level," Wade said at the programme's launch in March.

He said that Jordan, with a small market, has a greater potential to achieve rapid growth.

"Jordan has a potential of changing rapidly and attracting direct foreign investments more than the gigantic markets," Wade added.

Saudi Arabia to boost ties with Syria

DAMASCUS (R) — Saudi Arabia is encouraging its businessmen to invest more in Syrian development projects as part of efforts to boost the kingdom's economic and commercial ties with Damascus. Saudi Commerce Minister Osama Ben Jaarfa Ben Ibrahim Al Faqih said Saturday.

He told Reuters in an interview that he expected that several commercial and economic deals would be signed on the sidelines of Damascus' 45th international trade fair which opened in the Syrian capital Friday.

"I do not have details so far but I think these deals by private Saudi businessmen would be worth hundreds of millions of dollars," Faqih said.

Over 50 countries are taking part at the Damascus fair in which hundreds of local and multinational companies ranging from construction firms to oil and gas corporations and services are taking part.

"Saudi Arabia has been taking part at the annual Damascus fair without interruption since it started 45 years ago. We are very proud about this fact," Faqih said.

The Saudi minister said that

investment by Saudi businessmen in Syria had increased dramatically during the last few years due to the introduction of a new investment law in Syria in 1991 that gave big incentives to investors.

"I do not have an exact figure about the volume of this investment but the Saudi money invested here is huge. It covers several sectors including construction, tourism, industry and other fields," Faqih said.

He said the volume of trade between Syria and Saudi Arabia stood at \$470 million per year "but here I am talking only about commodities which we can trace. We do not have exact figures on the volume of other sectors which is much bigger."

The Saudi minister said that his country's economic ties with Syria had been organised in 1972 when both signed an economic and commercial deal according to which customs duties on local products were abolished completely.

"Saudi Arabia and Syria were keen when they signed the deal to include articles in it that would help both countries move smoothly towards the achievement of economic integration," he said.

Syrian Economy and For-

eign Trade Minister Mohammed Imadi, speaking to Reuters also about Syrian-Saudi economic cooperation, said that both countries were working closely to improve their economic and commercial cooperation.

"Our determination to improve and promote the existing economic cooperation reflects the political will of our leadership to boost joint ties," Imadi said.

"I can say that the joint Syrian-Saudi commission which is holding regular meetings has made big achievements during the recent years including the creation of a council of Syrian-Saudi businessmen which is following up the construction of projects in both countries," Imadi said.

Imadi said that Saudi Arabia has been Syria's biggest Arab trade partner for several years and that cooperation was expected to improve in the coming years especially when several Syrian industrial projects were completed.

"Several Saudi projects have benefited from our law number 10 for 1991. This law gave big incentives to investors including the exemption of tax up to seven years and a cut of 50 per cent for five more years," he said.

Government officials, private sector leaders prepare for EFTA talks

AMMAN (Petra) — Ministry of Industry and Trade Secretary General Mohammad Halaika Saturday chaired a meeting for senior ministry officials and private sector leaders during which they reviewed the draft agreement proposed by the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the Jordanian strategy for negotiating this agreement.

The meeting aimed to prepare for the first round of talks between Jordan and EFTA, scheduled in Geneva on Sept. 22, to discuss details for signing an agreement.

Under the agreement, EFTA member states will cancel all customs duties and other fees and taxes on Jordanian exports to these countries, as well as on Jordan's imports from these countries.

Jordan's imports from the EFTA countries amounted to JD63.7 million in 1997, mostly from Switzerland, while Jordanian exports amounted to JD360,000. Jordanian imports

from EFTA countries during the first half of 1998 amounted to JD25.5 million while exports during the period totalled JD0.02 million.

The agreement will set the stage for concluding bilateral agreements between Jordan and the respective EFTA countries to import agricultural products from Jordan because the provisions of the agreement do not cover neither agricultural products, nor industrial foodstuffs.

The agreement also allows Jordan to increase customs duties by up to 25 per cent for a maximum period of three years to protect new and certain industries which need restructuring.

However, the volume of such imports to which additional taxes may be added, should not exceed 15 per cent of the total imports from EFTA countries.

EFTA groups Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.7600	0.8952	1.4400	141.75	1.6620	1739.35	1.9853	5.9006	
DE Mark	0.5682	1.0000	0.8181	80.53	0.8872	987.99	1.1282	3.3522	
GB Sterling	1.6900	2.9672	1.0000	238.15	2.6242	2922.11	3.3353	9.9130	
CH Franc	0.6944	1.2218	0.4131	96.41	1.0843	1207.46	137.82	4.0962	
JP Yen	0.0071	1.2412	0.4196	1.0155	1.1016	12.27	140.01	4.1612	
CA Dollar	0.6402	1.1323	0.3836	0.9304	1.10	1118.22	1.2781	3.7957	
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0115	0.3420	0.0628	1228.50	0.8977	11.41	3.3912	
NL Guilder	0.0037	0.8858	0.2995	72.50	0.7862	875.45	1.2699		
FR Franc	0.1895	0.2982	0.1008	24.4002	24.00	0.2547	33.64	33.6400	

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7090	3.7500	0.3770	3.6385	0.3067	3.6728	1519.00	3.4276
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	1.0000	5.3032	0.5317	5.1319	0.4326	5.1803	2142.45	4.8343
Saudi Riyal	0.2660	0.1885	1.0000	0.1003	0.97	0.0816	0.99	403.99	0.9116
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8807	9.9737	1.0000	9.65	0.8135	8.74	4029.28	9.0919
Qatar Dinar	0.3748	0.1949	1.0334	1.0334	1.0000	0.0843	1.01	417.48	0.9420
Kuwait Dinar	3.2695	2.3117	12.2995	1.2292	11.86	1.198	11.98	4952.72	0.9420
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0237	1.0235	0.9907	0.0835	1.01	413.58	0.9332
Lebanese L1000	0.65	0.4658	2.4753	0.2482	2.3953	0.2019	2.4179	1.2781	2.2564
Egyptian	0.2915	0.2069	1.0970	0.1100	1.0616	0.0895	1.0718	443.18	

Energy		USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
Oil	Last	revised				
Brent	0.00	0.00				
W. Texas	13.50	13.31				
Bonny	0.00	0.00				
Dubai	12.09	12.53				
UL Gas	130.00	130.00				

Mid-East Currencies						
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	
SA Riyal	0.2660	0.4682	0.15931	0.33311	37.7131	
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.47934	0.16207	0.3922	38.6085	
KW Dinar	3.2605	5.74053	1.94062	4.89704	462.321	
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.67071	1.67903	3.82117	376.081	
CY Pound	1.5301	3.397	1.1485	2.7793	273.592	

Metal Prices			USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
Metal	Bid	Offer					
Gold (oz's)	273.75	274.25					
Silver (oz's)	4.66	4.69					
Platinum (oz's)	353.7	355.7					
AL (3 Months)	1358	1358					
CU (3 Months)	1807	1812					
Zinc (3 Months)	1028	1031					
Lead (3 Months)	539	542					
NI (3 Months)	4150	4180					

Libor Fixing						
Period	-1-	-3-	-6-	-1-		
Ctry	Month	Months	Months	Year		
USD	5.6445	5.6260	5.6383	5.5313		
GBP	7.5547	7.5250	7.5742	7.3750		
JPY	0.6602	0.6328	0.6367	0.5657		
DEM	3.4688	3.5000	3.5938	3.5553		
FRF	3.5000	1.6133	1.6953	1.8164		
CHF	1.5703	3.5566	3.5938	3.5875		
ITL	6.2120	6.1540	4.7471			

Main Equity Indices						
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low
New York	DOW JONES	8051.65	-114.31	-1.4	8244.62	8011.52
New York	S&P 500	1027.25	-15.34	-1.47	1051.8	1021.04
London	FT-SE 100	6249.4	-119.1	-2.22	6371	6108.7
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	13915.63	-498.16	-3.46	14289.2	13792.8
Paris	CAC 40	3708.97	-36.67	-0.98	3777.61	3584.25
Frankfurt	DAX	4993.54	-57.3	-1.33	5017.38	4752.4

Energy			USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
Commodity	Last	Delivery					
Coffee (c/lbs)	118.08	Spot					
Cocoa (\$/ton)	2007	Spot					
Sugar (\$/ton)	234	Spot					
Wheat (\$/ton)	99.3	Spot					
Soyas (c/lbs)	23.89	Spot					
Tea (kg/kg)	125	Spot					
Barley (\$/bsh)	0	Spot					
Rice (\$/ton)	415	Spot					

JOD Cross Rates			
Currency	Buy	Sell	
US Dollar	0.708	0.710	
GB Sterling	1.1885	1.1944	
DE Mark	0.4022	0.4042	
CH Franc	0.491	0.4935	
FR Franc	0.12	0.1206	
JP Yen	0.4988	0.5013	
NL Guilder	0.3564	0.3582	
IT Lira	0.4057	0.4087	

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

Philippine edges closer to recession

MANILA (AFP) — The Philippines has revealed that its economy had shrunk in the quarter to June, but remained defiant it would buck the Asian trend and escape a full-blown recession.

Economic Planning Secretary Felipe Medalla said the gross national product

(GNP) in the second quarter — the three months to June — contracted 0.7 per cent while the gross domestic product (GDP) dropped 1.2 per cent.

It was the first time in six years that the country suffered an economic contraction in that quarter.

The contraction from

April to June was a humbling experience for the Philippines which has previously boasted that it could evade the brunt of the regional currency crisis and continue enjoying growth. First-half GNP rose 0.6 per cent, while GDP inched up 0.2 per cent, he said in a news conference.

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

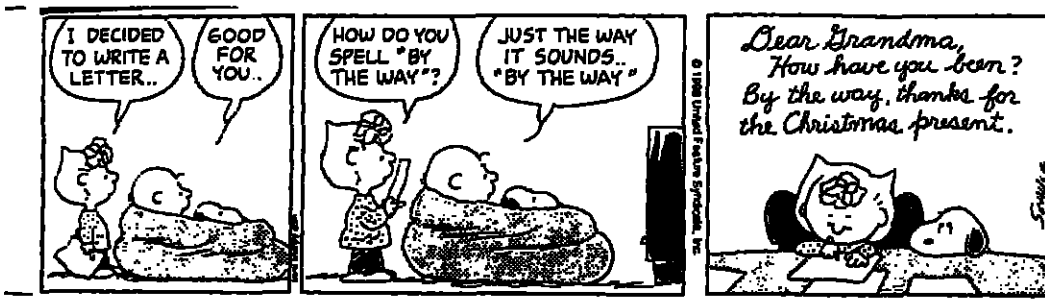
ACROSS

- College cheers
- Secretarial
- Jason's ship
- Melville's "types" sequel
- Polson
- Stroll
- Khayyam
- Chestnut-and-white horses
- Last of a team?
- Two dances
- Hoagie
- Eliminate
- Individual
- Relaxed (oneself)
- Used to be
- Alabama town
- Highest point
- Helpful tip
- Two dances
- Well-practiced skills
- RBI or ERA
- Golf's Cup
- Regret
- Educational environment
- Crafty
- Nabokov novel
- Fred
- Three dances
- Truant from USAF
- OT birds
- Opposed to: pref.
- Across Turner
- "Divine Comedy" poet
- Single thing
- Causic substances
- Senior
- Iditarod terminus

DOWN

- Skyline component
- Bullets, briefly
- Prank on the press
- Categorizes
- Flashing light
- Hom honk
- Pop quiz
- Pinta's sister
- In a movie
- Symbol of achievement
- Current fashion
- Valley
- Gumbo
- Ingredient
- Part of RFD
- Help
- Starlet's dream
- Former Indian leader
- Bring joy
- Fattuccine or linguine
- Sequence of eight
- Struck
- Gale forces
- Heavenly harpist
- "Tale"
- "Miniver"
- Horse staple
- Lark
- Bone to Fido, e.g.
- Carpentry tool
- More hateful
- Book of maps
- Clemens' pen name
- Farway's "Green Monster", e.g.
- Not home
- Solitary
- Egg-shaped
- "The Swedish Nightingale"
- Singer Smith
- Toward the center
- Watch winder
- Duration

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"Even when dad was stressed out from work, he found time to tell me stories. My favorite was 'Goldlocks And The Three Jerks from Shipping'."

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argillon

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

NORCO

ARATO

RUFIAN

VOORDE

Now arrange the circled letters in form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: A O O O O IN THE O O O O O

Yesterday's Jumbles: PIANO OZONE SURETY WALNUT Answer: What the race car driver did at



Patrick Rafter

Rafter, Rusedski in semis

COMMACK (AFP) — Australian Pat Rafter and Briton Greg Rusedski set up a rematch of their 1997 U.S. Open final here Friday with quarter-final wins in the \$315,000 Hamlet Cup.

Rusedski posted an easy 6-2, 6-3 victory over Czech Daniel Vacek in one hour.

Rafter, the second seed here who defeated Rusedski in last year's U.S. Open final, needed only 55 minutes to dispose of France's Nicolas Escude 6-3, 6-2.

Rafter also beat Rusedski at last year's season-ending ATP Tour World

Championship in Hannover. The fourth-seeded Rusedski moved into his fourth semi-final of the year. The left-handed Englishman showed little rust against Vacek after being sidelined with a sprained ankle for seven weeks. He never lost his serve, and broke Vacek three times.

"I was pleased with the way I played," Rusedski said. "It was really gusty and blowing around the court. I handled the conditions well. I'm hitting my volley well and my serve is getting bet-

ter. Hopefully, I can continue to progress and continue to improve heading into the Open.

In other quarter-final play, eighth seed Felix Mantilla of Spain got past 1997 French Open champion Gustavo Kuerten of Brazil 6-4, 2-6, 6-4, and will play Russian teenager Marat Safin in the semi-finals.

Safin, 18, dispatched lucky loser David Prinosil of Germany 6-1, 7-6 (7/1).

Jordan wins gold, bronze medals at Stoke Mandeville Games

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Kingdom's Khitam Abu Awad and Fatima Azzam Friday won a gold medal in the team's table tennis competition at the Stoke Mandeville Games for the handicapped currently underway in England.

The duo won against players from England, Chinese Taipei and Ireland.

Also Jordan's Mohammad Al Ash'al and Nidal Abu Dalboun won a bronze in the same competition against players from Hong Kong, England, Chinese Taipei, Holland, Australia, Kuwait, Israel and Korea.

Twenty-eight countries are taking part in the games.

Jordan's Maha Barghouti last week won a gold medal when she broke the world record in the 100-metre wheelchair race at the World Handicapped Athletics Championships in Birmingham, in which 62 countries competed.

Jordanian team arrives in Taiwan for 10-team Basketball Tournament

From Samir Janakat in Taiwan and Aleen Bannayan in Amman

JORDAN'S MEN'S basketball team arrived in Taiwan, Chinese Taipei, Saturday to join nine other teams in the 21st International William Jones Basketball Tournament.

The week-long event gets underway Sunday when the hosts play Malaysia in the opening match.

The Kingdom's team had two training sessions before opening their matches against Chinese Taipei Monday. They then play the UAE, Korea and Malaysia.

The participating teams have been divided into two groups. The first includes Jordan, Chinese Taipei, UAE, Korea, Malaysia while Group 2 includes Japan, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines and Costa Rica.

The top two teams in each group will play in the semifinals while the rest will play for 5th-10th places.

The Jordanian team has a tough task ahead with tournament regulations stipulating that the host team qualifies to the semifinals, regardless of its results in the preliminary round.

This means Jordan has to win Group 1 to ensure qualification since taking second place in case Taipei does not take first place will drop Jordan out of contention because Taipei will then qualify with the first placed team.

Another dilemma facing Jordan's team is adjusting to play without four key players after Al Jazireh Club withdrew their players from all national team lineups on the eve of the men's team's departure citing "bias against their players."

While so far filing to solve the issue, the Jordan Basketball Federation named two other players (one from Orthodox and another from Ahli clubs) to the lineup that left Amman with only ten players.

In preparation for the tournament, the team had a training camp in Athens

during which they played six matches winning two and losing the rest.

They also hosted the Iraqi national team winning 93-65 in the first friendly while the second ended in a 79-79 draw after the Iraqis refused to play overtime to determine the winner.

The team includes mainly Under-22 players and are joined by veterans Hilal Barakat and Yousef Zaghloul, in addition to Nasser Bassam, Faisal Nsour, Fadi Saqqa, Mohammad Shamali, Ayman Du'eis and Ashraf Samara. Jan Sahlieh and Kamal Hilou were recalled to the lineup after Ma'an Odeh, Husam Lutfi and Yousef Abu Bakr, Ala' Bilbeisi of Al Jazireh withdrew.

The Kingdom was placed seventh in the last Asian Basketball Championship which was held in Saudi Arabia last year.

Qualifier stuns top-seeded Bjorkman

BROOKLINE, Massachusetts (AP) — Qualifier Sebastien Grosjean of France upset top-seeded Jonas Bjorkman 7-6 (9-7), 6-1 Friday to advance to the semifinals of the MFS Pro Tennis Championship at the Longwood Cricket Club.

Bjorkman had appeared headed to win the first set but double-faulted in the tiebreaker at set point.

Grosjean, whose best previous showing had been a fourth-round appearance at Wimbledon, then rallied to win the tiebreaker and a convincing second-set victory.

Bjorkman, of Sweden, was frustrated with his defeat.

"I think if you pressure him, you can defeat him," Bjorkman said. "I made too many mistakes. That was the difference today."

I lost it more than he won it."

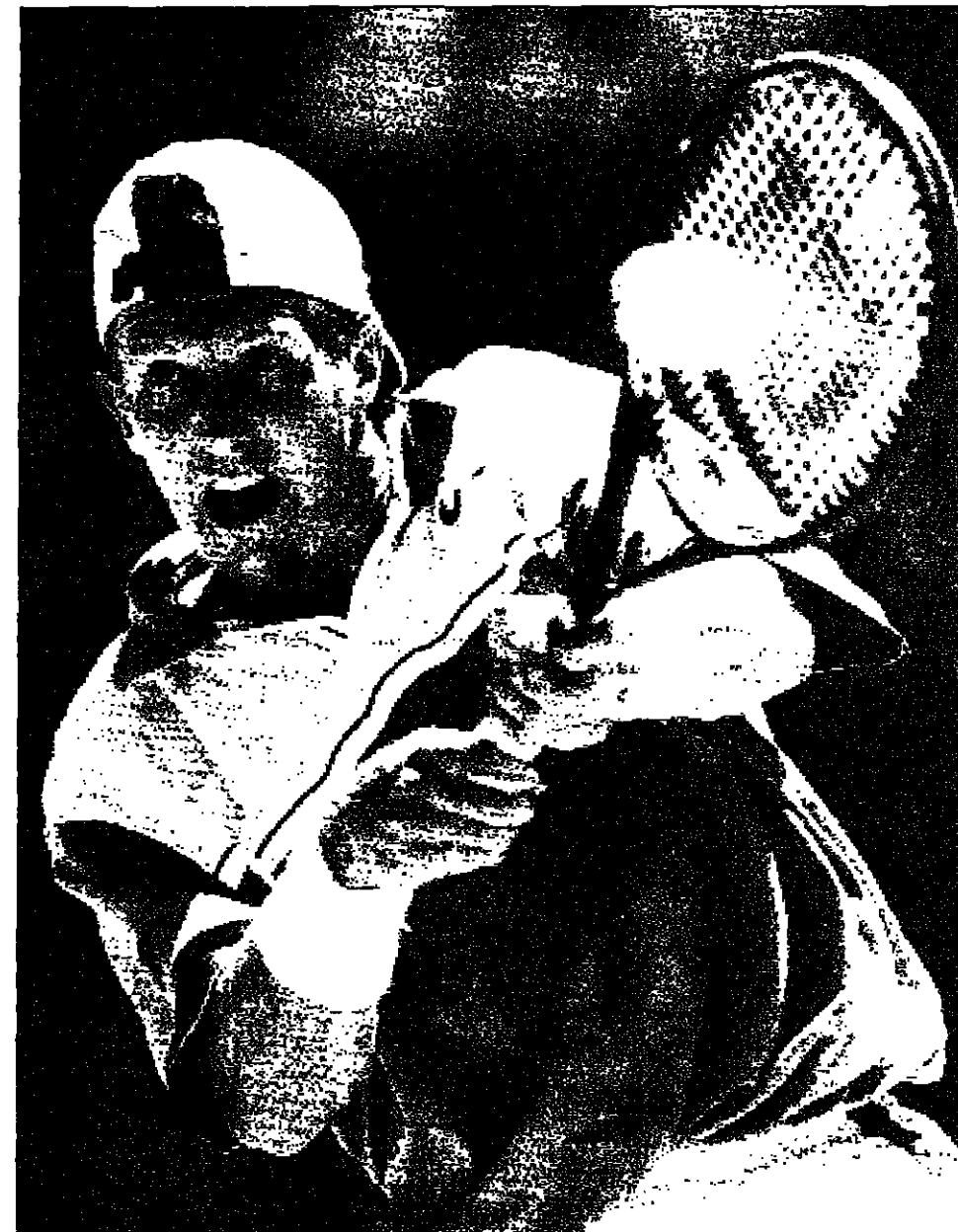
In other quarterfinals Friday, fourth-seeded Michael Chang defeated Gianluca Pozzi of Italy 6-4, 2-6, 6-1, and Paul Haarhuis of the Netherlands beat countryman and defending champion Sjeng Schalken 6-6, 6-4, 6-3.

Chang, who was broken twice in the second set, easily won the third set as Pozzi seemed to wear down at the end of the match.

Pozzi broke Chang in the second game of the first set before Chang rallied.

"The first set was when I had my chances," Pozzi said. "I played well in the second set. He's very good, but if I had won that first set, the match would have been mine."

Pozzi won the second set with breaks in the fifth and seventh games, dominating the set with a strong baseline game that kept Chang off-



Jonas Bjorkman

balance.

Chang, however, resumed control in the final set. He broke Pozzi in the second game and went to a 4-1 lead. He again broke Pozzi in the sixth game and served out for the match.

Haarhuis fought off three break points in the second set and came back to win it

by breaking Schalken in the seventh game.

"I started moving better," Haarhuis said. "When he was playing so well, I just tried to stay in it."

Haarhuis and Schalken held serve and were tied 3-3 in the third set.

Haarhuis then changed tactics, employing a serve

and volley game. He broke Schalken in the seventh game and went on to register 10 consecutive points, winning the final three games.

"The momentum definitely turned in the third set," Haarhuis said. "In the last three games of the match, he mentally wasn't there anymore."

ATP Tour says androstenedione already banned

NEW YORK (AFP) — The ATP Tour Friday denied a New York Times report that it recently forbade the use of the nutritional supplement androstenedione, saying it had been on its list of banned substances for some time.

A spokesman for the men's tennis tour said the over-the-counter supplement that has gained national attention through its use by baseball home run hero Mark McGwire, was banned by the ATP under the heading of "related substances" because it can result in the increase in the ratio of testosterone.

Androstenedione, which is metabolized by the body into testosterone, is believed to build strength and speed recovery from injury.

The remarks contradicted the report in Friday's New York Times in which Bill Norris, medical trainer for the

ATP, said players will officially be notified of the ban Monday, the first day of the U.S. Open.

"Contrary to published reports, the ATP Tour did not ban the substance effective today, and that was because it was already covered under our anti-doping program," the tour said in a prepared statement. "The inference that players who took the substance before that date were not subject to the anti-doping regulations is also incorrect."

ATP Tour vice president of communications Graeme Agars said androstenedione was on the list of banned substances "for some time" and well before McGwire's use of it was publicized last week.

The substance already is banned by the International Tennis Federation, which governs Grand Slam events, in accordance with the ban by

the International Olympic Committee.

"The ATP Tour's Anti-Doping programme is part of a unified tennis anti-doping programme that also includes the ITF and WTA, and is independently administered by Managed Athletic Testing Services in Florida," the statement said.

The Times report claimed the ATP planned to ban the substance following the recommendation of Managed Athletic Testing Service, the tour's medical consultant, which cited potential side effects such as "brittleness" of joint ligaments. Norris told the newspaper he had been besieged with questions from players about the substance.

Britain's Greg Rusedski, the runner-up to Pat Rafter at last year's U.S. Open and known for his powerful serves, said he has not used

androstenedione and does not plan to try it.

"They don't know the side effects," Rusedski said. "It hasn't been tested by the (Food and Drug Administration). It's probably absolutely fine, but I'm not going to throw anything in my body without knowing the side effects."

"I don't know what other players do," Rusedski continued. "I haven't had the temptation. I don't think a tennis player needs to get muscular. He needs to be dynamic and quick. If they took it, it would be for endurance and quickness."

Androstenedione has not been deemed illegal by Major League Baseball or the National Basketball Association, but it is banned in the National Football League and in U.S. university sports.

Dalglish vows legal action against Newcastle

NEWCASTLE (AFP) — Kenny Dalglish denied Friday that he quit willingly as coach of English Premiership giants Newcastle United, claiming he had been sacked and vowing to take the club to court.

Newcastle earlier claimed that Dalglish had offered to quit on August 18 but stayed on at the club until they found a successor.

But the Scot, who has resigned from managerial posts at Liverpool and Blackburn in the past, was adamant he had been dismissed by Newcastle after just two matches of the new season.

In a statement he said: "Newcastle United plc's press release is seriously inaccurate. Their statement says that the club 'reluctantly agreed to release Mr Dalglish from his contract'."

"The truth is that I did not resign. They terminated my contract without notice or any prior warning to me."

"I received first news of Newcastle United's decision through the press. No offer of compensation has been made. I have appointed legal advisers and will defend the interests of myself and my family vigorously."

The Scot, who is expected to fight for compensation after being replaced by former Chelsea striker Ruud Gullit after 18 months, added: "I have been advised that I can make no further statement but in the meantime I wish the club, its players and its supporters every success in the future."

GOREN BRIDGE

THE CASE OF THE VANISHING TRICK			
WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSH ©1998 Tribune Media Services, Inc.			
North-South vulnerable. South deals.			
NORTH			
♠ 97			
♥ Q8652			
♦ A104			
♣ J52			
WEST			
♠ Q10832			
♥ A			
♦ 873			
♣ 10863			
SOUTH			
♠ A7			
♥ J10943			
♦ KQJ6			
♣ KQ			
The bidding:			
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST			
1P Pass 4P Pass			
Opening lead: Three of ♠			
It was the final of the club championship. One of the teams was captained by the famous Belgian detective, Hercule Poirot, the other by George Neardowell, a man who had acquired his wealth by dubious means and was high on the list of members Poirot disliked.			
In both rooms the contract was four hearts, with the opening lead of a low spade. Neardowell captured			
East's king with the ace, crossed to the queen of hearts. East, Capt. Hastings, correctly played low, and in the fullness of time declarer lost two trump tricks, a spade and a club for down one. When scores were compared, Hastings found that Poirot had made the contract.			
"I can't see how you did it," the captain exclaimed to Poirot. "You have four obvious losers."			
"How typical of Neardowell to try to bring home the game by shuffling," replied the Great Detective. "I, mon ami, applied the little grey cells instead, and found a line that would make against most even distributions of the diamond suit."			
"I, too, won the opening lead with the ace but immediately played four rounds of diamonds. Consider the predicament of my opponents, Hastings. If West ruffed with the ace, I would discard a spade from dummy and the defenders would come to only one ruff, one trump and the ace of clubs. Therefore, West had to discard and I got rid of the table's spade loser and East ruffed low. But now, when I regained the lead and led a trump, the ace and king crashed on the same trick, and I had only three losers!"			
"Simple, n'est ce pas?"			

Zoff announces new squad

ROME (AFP) — Italy's new coach Dino Zoff rung the changes here on Friday when he announced his squad to face Wales in their 2000 European championship qualifier at Anfield next month.

Zoff's axe fell on World Cup goalkeeper Gianluca Pagliuca and defender Alessandro Costacurta, while skipper Paolo Maldini also misses Zoff's first game in charge with an abdominal muscle injury. Roberto Baggio's prayers, however, were answered. The 31-year-old joins the expected strike force of Christian Vieri and Alessandro Del Piero.

Three men get their first call-up to the squad — Jonathan Banchini and Giuliano Giannicchedda, both midfielders from last season's revelation side Udinese, and defender Michele Serena, who has just left Fiorentina to join Atletico Madrid in Spain.

Zoff has kept faith with AC Milan's Demetrio Albertini, who had a poor World Cup. Dino Baggio and their best midfielder at France 98, combative newcomer Luigi Di Biagio.

A market research company requires staff for temporary and longer term employment in the following areas:

- * research assistants
- * interviewers
- * data entry operators
- * data control staff

Market research experience not necessary but applicants must be able to demonstrate relevant experience and skills.

Please send CV to:
"Vacancies", P.O. Box: 830351,
Amman 11183, JORDAN

FOR RENT

A distinguished one bedroom apartment in Shmeisani, behind Marriott Hotel. Fully furnished, 100 sq.m., second floor, large veranda, water, electricity, telephone, satellite. (Yearly basis).

Please call Mr. Jarrar at Tel.: 5665972, Mobile: 82822

Kids' Castle

Are you still looking for a Kindergarten for your kids?

- * Come and visit us at Kids' Castle and see what we have for you.
- * The latest teaching methods in reading and writing English and Arabic.
- * Our teachers are all university graduates.
- * We offer breakfast * Our water is filtered.
- * School hours are from 7:30am-2:30pm.
- * Safety & security, our main concern.

Registration Still Open
7:30am-3:00pm

We mold the children of the future

Al-Swidyah - Tel.: 5811891 / 079 94224 - P.O. Box 5662 - Amman 11183, Jordan

Khatib off to NAM summit, Rifai represents King Nzo: NAM to modernise or die

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdul Ilah al Khatib left Saturday for South Africa to represent Jordan at the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) foreign ministers conference which precedes for a Non-Aligned Summit conference opening on Sept. 2.

In a pre-departure statement, Khatib said the ministers will discuss a host of regional and international questions, including the Middle East peace process, dialogue between the north and the south, and economic cooperation among developing nations.

Khatib said that the conference offers a good opportunity for Jordan to submit its case regarding these questions, pointing out that Jordan, which enjoys respect from all the non-aligned nations, was among the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) which was established in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955.

He said that Jordan truly believes in non-aligned nations' ability to play a key role on the international scene.

Khatib noted that on the sidelines of the conference, he will hold talks with Arab foreign ministers attending the meeting to discuss issues of concern to the Arab World.

The minister and his delegation will afterwards attend the NAM summit conference.

His Majesty King Hussein has entrusted Senate President Zeid Rifai to represent him at the summit meeting where he will lead a Jordanian delegation to the conference to be attended by 113 nations.

Rifai is expected to deliver King Hussein's address to the summit outlining the Kingdom's views with regard to regional and international issues.

German envoy: Sudan's bombed factory made only pharmaceuticals

BONN (AFP) — The Sudan factory hit by U.S. missiles did not make components for possible chemical weapons but only pharmaceuticals and veterinary products, Germany's ambassador to Khartoum was quoted Saturday as saying.

"The factory mainly produces anti-biotics, medications against diarrhoea and malaria, preparations for transfusions and veterinary products," Werner Daum was quoted by the German news magazine Der Spiegel as saying in an internal report to his government.

The magazine quoted from a leaked five-page report by Bonn's mission chief to Sudan on the strike against the plant, which Washington claimed had been making chemical elements of the nerve gas VX. Sudan has vehemently denied Washington's claims about the activities of the Al Shiffa plant which was destroyed in the Aug. 20 U.S. attack, saying it produced only pharmaceutical products.

"In no way can the plant be described as a chemical factory," the German envoy was quoted as saying in Monday's edition of Der Spiegel, an advance copy of which was made available. "A number of pharmacologists and business representatives visited the enterprise

daily," he said. "All the raw materials came from China and Europe."

A source close to the German government confirmed that Daum had faxed a note to Bonn on the night of the U.S. attack. But the source said that it had been a hurried draft "written without knowledge of the facts and the general circumstances."

German foreign ministry spokesman Martin Erdmann had no comment on the reported message by the Khartoum ambassador.

Der Spiegel itself said that after the German government had given its backing to the U.S. raids on the Sudan 'factory' and 'an alleged terrorist base in Afghanistan, the Bonn foreign and defence ministries had not taken the ambassador's report too seriously and had treated it as "subjective."

The raids were in retaliation for terrorist bomb blasts at U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar Es Salaam which claimed 257 lives, including those of 12 Americans.

Sudanese President Omar al Bashir launched an appeal on Saturday for "resistance" against the U.S. "The U.S. has made a grave mistake in declaring war against us," Bashir said.

DURBAN (AFP) — South African Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo told delegates at the opening session of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit that the 113-nation organisation had to modernise to survive.

He said the movement was unrivalled for its efforts to build just and equitable global conditions, "but we all need to modernise and sharpen its instincts lest atrophy sets in."

"The challenges that the new century thrusts on us are more complex than ever," Nzo told delegates from some 80 countries at the opening session. "They are intricate in their nature, potentially divisive and staggering in scope and depth."

He said the legacy of movement's founders "instructs us to look with candour into ourselves and the conflicts and tensions present within and between us."

Those conflicts will occupy much of the business of the summit, particularly the fighting in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in which Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Rwanda and Uganda — all member states — have become embroiled.

The head of the DRC delegation here, Kikaya Ben Karubi, told AFP that President Laurent Kabila had confirmed his intention to come to the summit, but his appearance here depended "on the military situation on the ground. If it is going our way he will come."

U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan is expected to hold talks on the crisis with leaders of southern African states following his arrival at the summit Wednesday.

But several other countries have long-term internal or external conflicts which will affect the tenor of the meeting — Sudan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Eritrea and Ethiopia, to mention a few — are all represented.

Libyan delegates were Saturday busy preparing their official position on the Lockerbie bombing — another side issue — after Washington and London offered to try the two Libyans suspected of carrying out the mid-air bombing in the Netherlands.

South Africa, which takes over the chairmanship of the huge, politically divergent organisation from Colombia at the summit, has said it intends to keep greater cooperation among the poorer states of the south and United Nations reform at the forefront of NAM policy into the new millennium.

Nzo said the organisation "must continue to be the conscience and the champion of the many voices of the weak and the powerless in defiance of the dominant hegemony of the strong and powerful."

The United States, Britain and France, who unofficially represent the richer states of the north, have been invited as observers to the conference for the first time.

The delegates' preparatory session is to be followed by a meeting of NAM foreign ministers Monday and Tuesday, which will streamline proposals to be set before a full summit of heads of state and government Wednesday and Thursday.

The heads of state will issue a communique on the last day of the summit outlining the organisation's agenda for the coming three years.



Colombian Foreign Minister and outgoing Secretary of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Dr. GF de Soto is watched by delegates on a monitor at the opening of the 12th NAM summit in Durban, the biggest summit ever held by the NAM with participants from 83 member countries and some 53 heads of state having confirmed their arrival in South Africa's second largest city (AFP photo)

British couple decide it is too good to eat the cake

LONDON (R) — A British couple who ordered a \$6,600 wedding cake in the shape of a fairy tale horse-drawn carriage have decided it is too good to eat. The cake was the centrepiece at a reception after Clare Byrne and Anthony Hegney's lavish wedding, the Mirror newspaper reported. But the couple didn't have the heart to cut the 1.5 metre long Cinderella-inspired creation with its pumpkin-shaped carriage, six horses and mice footmen all made of sponge and white icing. The cake took nine months to make.

64-year-old British mountaineer sets out for Tibet's most sacred peak

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's best-known mountaineer, 64-year-old Chris Bonington Friday set out to be the first man to climb Tibet's most sacred peak, Bonington, the first Briton to climb Mount Everest in 1975, and his six-man team will travel through eastern Tibet on a mission to be the first to scale the 7,600-metre Sepu Kangri mountain. The peak, whose name means the Great Snow Mountain by The Sacred Lake, lies in the eastern section of the Nyain-Qen-Tangla Shan range, 320 kilometres Northeast of the Tibetan capital Lhasa.

Sundance name not exclusive to Robert Redford

FORT WORTH (AP) — The Sundance Kid doesn't have a monopoly on the name. Robert Redford, who played the outlaw in "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" and uses the name on his Utah-based Sundance Enterprises, Sundance Film Festival and Sundance Institute, plans to start a chain of Sundance movie theatres, with one of them to be in Fort Worth, Texas. But theatres owned by Ed Bass already are named Sundance — so Redford's attorneys wrote to him, saying they wanted the name Sundance removed.

Radio's web site to post Goethe's poetry on the Web

LEIPZIG (AFP) — To celebrate Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's 250th birthday next year, Germany's international radio will post excerpts — both written and read — on the Internet. "We wanted to elicit, on the most modern of media, interest in the old master of German literature," said the radio's director Dieter Weirich Friday. So it is enlisting modern-day actors to read the author's poetry, plays and other writings aloud and making it available at the click of a mouse.

Cape Verde singer among UNESCO music prize winners

AIX-LA-CHAPELLE (AFP) — The 1998 UNESCO music prize has been awarded to Cape Verde singer Cesaria Evora. Franco-Greek composer Iannis Xenakis and a South African cultural centre, officials announced Friday. The Khongisa Youth Centre for Performing Arts, Music and Theatre has been recognised for its support of young performers since the end of the apartheid era. The prize, regarded as one of the most prestigious music awards, will be awarded in the German town of Aix-la-Chapelle October 17. It is jointly run by UNESCO and the International Music Council.

As Hebron clashes continue

PNA warns against settler expansion

In fear of Jewish militant reprisals Netanyahu's security to be increased

HEBRON (AP) — Palestinian boys hurled stones and empty bottles towards Israeli soldiers Saturday as the Palestinian leadership warned of escalating tensions in the fractious city if a Jewish enclave there is expanded.

Israeli soldiers responded with one round of rubber bullets towards the Palestinian protesters who ranged in age from ten to fourteen. No injuries were reported.

Tensions in the city have been flaring since the stabbing of a prominent rabbi in his home nine days ago, apparently by a Palestinian militant.

The Palestinian leadership issued a statement late Friday condemning Israeli plans to expand and fortify Tel Romeida, the heavily fortified Jewish enclave in the city centre where Rabbi Shlomo Raanan was killed.

"The Palestinian cabinet warns Israel that building in Tel Romeida would ignite an already tense situation," a statement issued after a meeting of the Palestinian cabinet read.

Responding to Raanan's killing, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced this week that Tel Romeida's trailer homes would be replaced by permanent structures.

After the killing, Israeli troops imposed a round-the-clock curfew on 30,000 Palestinians living in the Israeli-controlled downtown area near the Jewish settler enclaves.

In its statement, the Palestinian cabinet demanded the curfew be lifted immediately.

Most of Hebron's population live in the zone that Israel turned over to Palestinian control last year. The other 20 per cent, where 500 Jewish settlers live among 30,000 Palestinians, is controlled by Israel. The city is often a flashpoint for violence between Israelis and Palestinians.

Meanwhile, despite Israeli reports that an agreement over a much delayed troop withdrawal from the West Bank was in reach, Palestinian officials insisted Israel had not yet accepted a U.S. proposal to hand over a full 13 per cent of the area.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said Netanyahu has only accepted a 13 per cent pullback in which three per cent would be designated a nature reserve where Palestinians would have virtually no say over land use, including construction. The Palestinians have consistently rejected such an arrangement. "Mr. Netanyahu did not

accept 13 per cent as he is insinuating," Erekat told reporters after the cabinet meeting. "We really urge Mr.

Netanyahu to revive the peace process through a clear cut yes to the American initiative with all its components."

Foreign Report also said this week that an underground Jewish group was preparing "a series of assassinations of Arabs in the West Bank" and attacks on Jerusalem's Al Aqsa Mosque complex, Islam's third holiest shrine.

But the security official, who requested anonymity, said neither the police nor Israel's domestic intelligence service Shin Bet have information about the formation of any clandestine groups to carry out violence.

In the early 1980s Shin Bet broke up a network which carried out several anti-Arab attacks and was planning to blow up the Al Aqsa Mosque to block Israel's pullback from the Egyptian Sinai.

Shin Bet has also dismantled other groups of Jewish extremists out of fear they may try to commit anti-Arab terrorist attacks, a security official told AFP Friday.

"We are taking very seriously the risk that

U.S. says it will not negotiate over handover of Libyan suspects

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The U.S. said Friday it would not negotiate with Libya over "guarantees" in a plan to hand over for trial two suspects linked to the 1988 Lockerbie bombing.

"There are no details to negotiate with Libya, Libya has no grounds for delay," State Department spokesman James Foley said after Libyan President Muammar Qadhafi rejected the U.S. demand to "immediately" turn over two Libyans for trial in the Netherlands.

"We are not ready to send human beings like that, without guarantees," Qadhafi said in a live interview with the Qatari channel Al Jazeera.

Earlier Friday, White House spokesman Barry Toiv told reporters travelling with President Bill Clinton in Massachusetts: "The only choice for Libya is immediate compliance."

Toiv noted the U.N. Security Council's unanimous backing Thursday for the U.S.-British plan to put the two men on trial in the Netherlands.

Libya has agreed to deliver the two suspects to the Netherlands but Friday called for negotiations on judicial procedures.

A ministry statement called on Britain, the Netherlands and the U.S. "to begin discussions with [Tripoli] as soon as possible over ways to put into application the

initiative" for the trial.

On Thursday Qadhafi said in a television interview that Tripoli needed "guarantees" before handing over the suspects.

Washington favours easing U.N. sanctions against Libya if it follows through and extradites the men for trial but would tighten the measures if it refuses to hand them over.

The 15-member Security Council late Thursday unanimously adopted a resolution providing for suspension of six-year-old sanctions against Libya once the two suspects arrive in the Netherlands for trial.

"Our sole motivation is to seek justice on behalf of the victims and their families," Toiv said.

Nevertheless the U.S. insisted that the Security Council resolution include the threat of "additional measures" if the two men are not extradited promptly.

Before the Security Council vote, Libyan Ambassador Abuzed Dorda said Tripoli formally accepted the Netherlands trial but listed a series of procedural difficulties, which he said still needed to be ironed out.

The Libyan suspects, Abdul Basset Ali Mohammad Al Megrahi and Al Amin Khalifa Fhimah, are accused of blowing up Pan Am flight 103 over the Scottish village of Lockerbie in December 1988. The blast killed all 259 people on board and 11 people on the ground.

U.K. denies plot to kill Qadhafi

LONDON (R) — Britain on Saturday denied accusations by Libyan President Muammar Qadhafi that the British intelligence service had plotted to kill him.

Qadhafi said in an interview with Libyan television Friday that a plot to assassinate him was hatched under the former Conservative government administration. Libya, he said, had tapes and other material to prove it.

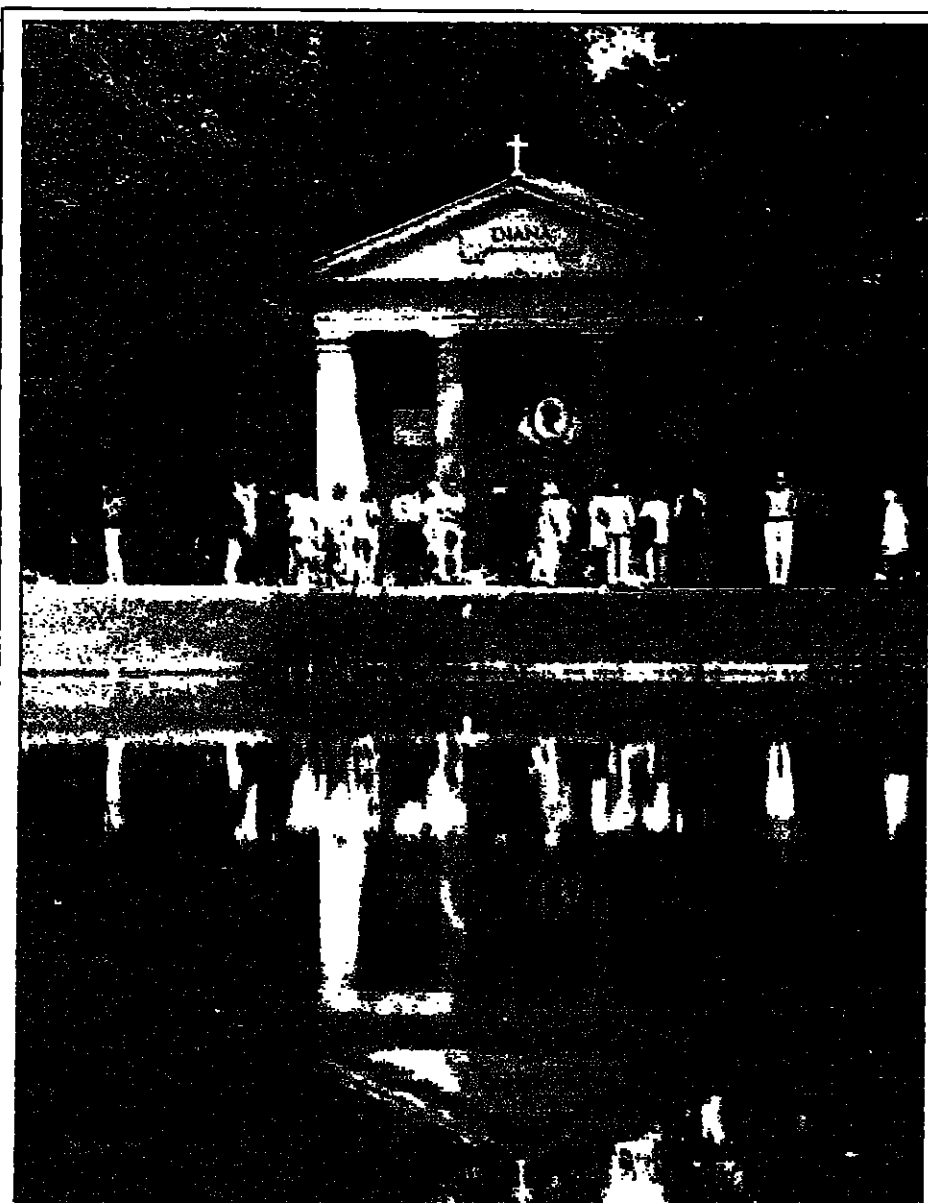
"This is an old claim. The foreign secretary has said there is no truth in it whatsoever," a British Foreign Office spokesman said. The allegation first surfaced earlier this month when a renegade former British intelligence officer said Britain's MI6 spy agency had given 100,000 pounds to an Arab agent in 1996 to plot a bomb under Qadhafi's motorcade.

The British intelligence officer, David Shayler, who is under arrest in Paris on charges of breaching Britain's Official Secrets Act, said the bomb was placed by Islamists under the wrong car and exploded killing several bystanders.

Foreign Secretary Robin Cook at the time dismissed the allegations as "pure fantasy." He said he had investigated the claims made by Shayler and was satisfied that no attempt had been made on Qadhafi's life.

Qadhafi attempted to link the allegations of a plot against him with negotiations for the extradition of two Libyans wanted for the 1988 Lockerbie airliner bombing and the 1986 U.S. bombing of Libya.

"How can they talk about Lockerbie and not talk about the massacre in 1986 of our people and children? How can we talk about Lockerbie and forget the assassination attempt which was organised by the British intelligence and which has witnesses to it?" the Libyan president asked.



REMEMBERING DIANA: Visitors walk past the monument to Diana, Princess of Wales, on the lake at her family home of Althorp in Northamptonshire, Saturday. Princess Diana died in a car crash in Paris a year ago (AP photo)